PASSION AND CONVICTION: THE LETTERS OF GRAHAM SPRY

Rose Potvin

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Graham Spry, who was born in 1900, epitomized the hopes and aspirations of the Canadian nation arising on the northern half of this continent. He was intimately involved in many of the issues which were to mould his country, but his involvement was neither haphazard nor fortuitous. Rather, Spry's participation in events was carefully orchestrated by him, by an act of will, by determination, conviction and passion.

He is remembered best for his work in establishing and maintaining Canada's public broadcasting system. He also played an important role in the League for Social Reconstruction; the founding of the CCF (now the NDP); the successes of North America's first socialist government, the T.C. Douglas administration in Saskatchewan; and, as one of Sir Stafford Cripps's staff, in the negotiations for the independence of India.

Although his interests spanned continents, his abiding love was for Canada, a love best described in his own words:

> *First as a perpetual and dominating conviction, there had become in my Winnipeg years from 1910 to moving to Folkestone, Kent in the late summer of 1915 to be near father … an instinctive devotion to the concept of [a] free self-governing Dominion of Canada, in a worldwide association with Britain and other countries sharing developing forms of Parliamentary government. (Spry Memoirs. NAC, Vol. 84-12)*

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edited by Rose Potvin

Canadian Plains Research Center
University of Regina
1992

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Canadian Plains Research Center
University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 0A2
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To my mother

Annie McGee Potvin

*For whom Graham's delicious description of Dublin,
on page 51, was included.*

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Graham receiving an honorary degree at York University, 1976.

Irene receiving an honorary degree at the University of Toronto, 1971.

Graham, early 1980s.

Preface

On the evening of 23 November 1983, Graham Spry sat in his living room discussing broadcasting issues with his close friend and colleague, Kealy Wilkinson. The next morning I received a telephone call telling me that Graham had died in his sleep.

I was sad for a minute or so, a selfish sadness realizing that my delightful lunches with Graham were over. But then I smiled and thought how fortunate I was to have known such an extraordinary human being, if only for a few years, and how fortunate he was to have had such an interesting and fulfilling career and then to have enjoyed a relatively healthy retirement.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier once stated that the twentieth century would belong to Canada, and Graham, who was born in 1900, epitomized the hopes and aspirations of the nation which was arising on the northern half of this continent. He was intimately involved in many of the issues which were to mould his country, but his involvement was neither haphazard nor fortuitous. Rather, Graham's participation in events was carefully orchestrated by him, by an act of will, by determination, conviction and passion.

He is remembered best for his work in establishing and maintaining Canada's public broadcasting system. He also played an important role in the League for Social Reconstruction; the founding of the CCF (now the NDP); the successes of North America's first socialist government, the T.C. Douglas administration in Saskatchewan; and, as one of Sir Stafford Cripps's staff, in the negotiations for the independence of India. He was deeply concerned about Canadian unity, and to this end cultivated friendships with francophone colleagues. He studied French and Russian, history and Gothic cathedrals, and left a remarkable library. He skated, skied, climbed Mont Blanc and rowed competitively.

*

Working on this book has been a pleasure. This is not to say that it was easy or fast to write; it was neither. Irene Spry asked me to write Graham's biography in early 1984 and though I was thrilled to have been offered such a unique challenge it was not until early 1988 that I was finally in a position to begin the research. Then, after many interviews with Graham's friends and colleagues, and many hours at the National Archives of Canada (NAC) reading through Graham's papers, I became convinced that the biographical form was not the best way to tell Graham's story.

Graham was an inveterate writer. He bought his first typewriter at the age of eight with money his grandmother had given him for Christmas. At the University of Manitoba he began making carbon copies of the letters he wrote and for the most part they were saved, as were many letters from family, friends and business associates. Graham also kept a diary at various periods in his life, usually when he was alone. In 1975 he began to write his memoirs and although they were never completed, they point to the issues and events which Graham thought were most important. In retirement, he was often interviewed about particular activities in which he had been involved; if the interviews were taped they were frequently transcribed and a copy given to him. Graham wrote numerous papers, reports and speeches, many of which were printed in journals or copied and kept on file. All of these, plus volumes of other papers, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, and articles by friends and acquaintances, are now in the "Graham Spry Papers" at the NAC. They take up the space of an average-sized dining room, from floor to ceiling. Graham's letters alone would probably fill fifteen to twenty volumes.

As I read through these papers, it became clear to me that Graham's story had already been told, by himself, through his letters, diaries, memoirs and papers. (He even mentioned in a letter to a friend that he hoped his letters would be assembled so that others could read them.) He was open and honest to his friends and especially to his wife. He told of his hopes, aspirations, frustrations and disappointments, as well as his interests and accomplishments. He recorded his innermost feelings, dreams and concerns in his diaries. His writing was clear, descriptive and detailed, sometimes passionate, and often full of humour. Finally, his friends, in their letters, provided the opinion of others. My job was simply to select the material, put some order into it, and introduce it with background information here and there. The result, in my view, is an intimate and interesting walk through recent Canadian and, to a lesser extent, international history with a man who was a keen observer of that history and who, in no small way, helped to shape it.

It was not easy to select the material to include in this book because I found all of it interesting and was certain the reader would, too; the first draft was twice the length of this one. What I did, in the end, was to ensure that all periods of Graham's life were covered and that his interests and work were recorded, to the extent possible, in proportion to their importance to him. Because Graham travelled as extensively and often as he did, his friendships are also described in proportion to their importance to him, with a few glaring omissions. His friendship with Alan Plaunt, for instance, was very close during the Radio League days in the 1930s.

However, because they worked together, there was little opportunity or need to write to one another. Similarly, Kealy Wilkinson worked closely with Graham in the Canadian Broadcasting League office in the 1970s, but they, too, had little reason to write to one another. As a mark of their friendship and mutual admiration, the family asked Kealy to be one of Graham's honorary pallbearers. Another close friend who goes unmentioned in the text, because no correspondence with her is among Graham's papers, was Lady Elton, the former Margaret Anne Bjarnason of Winnipeg, whom Graham met in Canada and who lived in England all through Graham and Irene's time in that country.

For all his writing, Graham never learned how to type properly. His "two-fingered" approach to the keys, and his habit of borrowing whatever typewriter he could lay his hands on when travelling, produced some rather strange examples of spelling and punctuation in many of his letters. Where it was obvious that they were mechanical errors they have been corrected. Proper names are also often misspelled. The *Farmers' Sun*, for instance, appears variously as *Farmer's Sun* and *Farmers Sun*. These, and all other proper names, have been corrected in the quotations to prevent the use of too many distracting "*sics*." Punctuation has been added to cables and upper case lettering has been changed to the lower case where appropriate.

There are also some examples, especially in the earlier letters, of strange uses of vocabulary, words that we would not use today in the manner in which Graham uses them. They probably reflect the convention of the time and have not been changed as their meaning becomes clear in the context in which they are used, or with repetition in different contexts. To avoid confusion, the letters themselves are separated by a triple asterisk (***).

End notes have been avoided by explaining, in the text, the people, issues and circumstances referred to in the letters. A bibliography is appended. The books listed were used to provide the background needed to understand the issues and organizations with which Graham was involved. All of the letters, diaries, memoirs, speeches and papers, including those that I have quoted, can be found carefully indexed in the "Graham Spry Papers" at the NAC. Short biographical notes on some of the more important individuals mentioned throughout are also appended.

I wish to thank the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council, the Walter and Duncan Gordon Charitable Foundation, the Douglas-Coldwell Foundation, CN–Canadian National, and Southam Inc., for their financial assistance. I also want to thank the staff at the NAC, especially Anne Goddard and Robert Albota who were very generous with their time and expertise, and the staff at the circulation desk who never once raised an eyebrow when I asked for the same volume to be dragged out of the stacks time and time again. I am also very grateful to C.A.

Santoro of the University of Manitoba, Archives and Special Collections, who brought out all the material he thought I might wish to see before my arrival.

I want to thank the following people for granting me interviews and hope I have forgotten no one: Jetty Robertson, Morden Lazarus, Margaret Sedgewick, George Cadbury, Jean Halton, Lady Mason (Bobby McDougall), Paul Bareau, Henri St. Denis, June and Merril Menzies. Lady Elton kindly sent me a tape of her thoughts about Graham. Two of Graham's friends who were most generous with their time, Eugene Forsey and King Gordon, have since died, as has Graham's brother, Major General Daniel Spry, who provided information about the Spry family that I would not otherwise have been able to obtain. Joan Gilday very generously provided me with a copy of the Spry family tree which she compiled. I also would like to thank Dr. Caroline Andrew of the University of Ottawa, Dr. William Brennan and Dr. Peggy Wigmore of the University of Regina, Ruth Gordon, Joan Horsman and Lib Spry, all of whom read a draft of the manuscript and provided constructive criticism. My sister Colleen spent three long, tedious weeks at the Archives with me checking every quotation for accuracy; to her a very special "thank you." Finally, I would like to thank the personnel of the Canadian Plains Research Center – Dr. James McCrorie "made my day" that cold January morning when he phoned to say he loved my manuscript. Working with him has been great fun. Brian Mlazgar and Agnes Bray provided valuable assistance in editing the manuscript, and have been responsible for all stages of the production of the book.

My deepest and most heartfelt thanks, however, go to Irene Spry. I cannot express adequately how much I admire her. She made available all of her private letters to and from Graham, an uncommonly generous thing to do. She gave me the rare privilege of working on a project that has been the most rewarding thing I have done. She read every draft of every chapter and corrected my spelling, grammar and errors of fact. Throughout the long process she was there, at the end of the telephone line, or in her living room, whenever I needed information, assurance, or encouragement. She, like Graham, is a very special human being and I am deeply honoured that she is my friend.

Rose Potvin
Ottawa, Ontario
April 1992

Introduction

> *As an individual's eighth decade comes near and the laughter and cries of the grandchildren are heard, the question slips into the failing energies of the brain: has my life been good? Has it been purposeful? Have I lived as fully as my capacities allowed? And have I been richly committed, have I been useful?*
>
> *Part of the answer, for any individual, emerges from a further question: what did I wish to do in and with that life? What commitment did I hope and will to enjoy?*
>
> *Definition does not come readily but a possible estimate is that from childhood I wished to feel the feeling of involvement in events, feel I was sharing wholly in the change and surge of my times, understanding what I could of the age, and, so far as merely one life allowed, hoping to serve the progress of society through serving family, nation, its associates and whatever circumstance opened to me. I wished to participate, to swim in or resist the sweep of the tides.*
>
> *Convictions, changing convictions as well as circumstance, played their role and I was happily blessed with opportunity, that kindly, good fortune we call good luck.* (Spry Memoirs. NAC, Vol. 84-9)

Graham was born "into the century," on 20 February 1900. He died on 24 November 1983. In his memoirs Graham spoke both of the hitching post for horses outside the house in which he was born, and of watching the televised coverage of a man landing on the moon, to indicate the span of years in which he lived. They are relevant examples, considering how much Graham travelled, and how communication was his first passion; both methods of travel and means of communication were revolutionized over the course of his lifetime.

Between the hitching posts and the instantaneous satellite delivery of news there were two world wars. One would think that, given Graham's age, he would have missed both, being too young for World War I and too old for World War II, but he did not. He was an enlisted soldier in the first war: he did not see action on the continent, a fact he tried to disguise after the war, but he did see zeppelins over Folkestone. In World War II he was in England's Home Guard and went to work in the morning wearing his tin hat and carrying his gas mask and rifle. As the war was winding down he badgered his friends until he was given press accreditation. This allowed him to march into Florence with the liberation forces in the summer of 1944. In the spring of 1945 he travelled with various Canadian regiments through Belgium, Holland and Germany. He was in Paris when word came that the fighting in Europe was over, and he was back in London for VE Day.

The 1920s saw the rise of unionism in Canada marked by the greatest strike ever – the Winnipeg General Strike in the spring and summer of 1919. The 1930s brought the collapse of untethered capitalism, the Great Depression, and consequent demands for a new social order. Graham took part in the Winnipeg strike – on what he later felt was the wrong side – when he was recruited as a special constable. He marched down Main Street on Bloody Saturday against the crowds of strikers gathered in Market Square. Tommy Douglas, just fourteen years old, watched from "a safe perch on a rooftop." It was pure luck that prevented Graham from being one of the constables sent to arrest J.S. Woodsworth. In 1933, Graham became a political ally of Woodsworth's; a few years later he and Tommy Douglas became fast friends as well as political colleagues.

In early 1932, in reaction to the deepening Depression, the League for Social Reconstruction (LSR) was founded to formulate policies that would point the way to social and economic reform in Canada. Later that year the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), which shared the views of the LSR but which had a mandate to be actively political, came into being. Graham was a founding member of the LSR. In 1934 he was one of the first to run for political office under the CCF banner in a by-election and in 1935 he ran again. He lost both races by what he called "large and enthusiastic majorities." In 1933 Russel Smart sent Graham to England to meet with the Socialist League and Labour Party officials. In 1936 he was in Russia on a fact-finding mission to see first hand how the Russian experiment with communism was working. Much later, in 1962, Graham recruited doctors in England to help break the Saskatchewan doctors' strike. Ultimately, this led to the establishment of medicare in Canada, a policy advocated by the LSR thirty years earlier.

In 1930 Graham spearheaded the campaign for which he is best known and for which he deserves to be listed among the most influential people of his time – to establish a national public broadcasting system in Canada. Graham and his friend and colleague, Alan Plaunt, mounted a campaign that is to this day a classic study on the art of lobbying: they articulated a clear and simple goal, that the broadcasting system must be owned and operated by Canadians for Canadians; they quietly and carefully identified and recruited individuals and groups that would collectively represent every element of Canadian society; and they studied the prejudices of members of Parliament (MPs) and other influential citizens, and then skillfully used that knowledge to construct convincing arguments. In just eighteen months, from October 1930 to April 1932, against formidable odds, they succeeded in convincing the Conservative government of the day to pass a bill, which received unanimous approval, establishing the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Corporation, subsequently renamed the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). In 1958, when giving the Alan Plaunt Memorial Lecture, Brooke Claxton said that the campaign "was one of the most remarkable accomplishments ever to take place in our country."

As most Canadians know, the fight for a Canadian public broadcasting system did not end in 1932; indeed, it exists to this day and it will no doubt have to be strenuously protected and defended for years to come. Graham was aware of this, and broadcasting became a lifelong interest. He monitored its progress and direction, even when he appeared to be totally engrossed in other issues, and he frequently jumped back into the fray, as in 1957, when private interests and American programming threatened to emasculate the CBC, and again, in retirement when he revitalized the Canadian Broadcasting League (called the Canadian Radio League (CRL) in the 1930s) to fight, with as much passion and conviction as he had demonstrated in the 1930s, to make broadcasting an instrument of national purpose. At a conference in Ottawa in 1970, after a fiery speech on the virtues of public broadcasting and against what Eugene Forsey called the "bandits" who owned and operated the private systems, a reporter suggested that Graham should hire a bodyguard.

Another issue of national interest with which Graham was concerned throughout his adult life was the ever-present tension between French- and English-speaking Canada. When Graham was hired in 1926 as national secretary of the Association of Canadian Clubs, he was asked to make special efforts to improve relations between French and English Canadians. What is remarkable is that he did not need to be reminded of this mandate or pushed into doing something about it. Graham taught himself French in the 1920s, using gramophone records. He continued to polish and perfect that skill with lessons and practice at every opportunity. Soon after his arrival in Ottawa he became friends with Marius Barbeau, the dominion ethnologist, and through him met many other French Canadians. He was a frequent dinner guest at the home of Ernest Lapointe, then minister of Justice in Mackenzie King's government; he joined the *Cercle Universitaire* and was then its only anglophone member. One summer he cycled with Marius Barbeau through the Baie St. Paul region and around the Île d'Orléans, collecting artifacts for the National Museum.

Within a week of the decision to create the CRL, Graham travelled to Montreal to enlist the support of Georges Pelletier, editor of the influential *Le Devoir*, and received from him a list of other French Canadians to approach. Pamphlets produced by both the Association of Canadian Clubs and the CRL were frequently translated into French. Much later, in 1958, the executive of the Canadian Broadcasting League put forth a list of people whom they thought should serve on the newly formed Board of Broadcast Governors. They sent Graham a copy of the list on which he scribbled: "All eastern and all but one academic – more French Canadians and Catholics." The executive committee, which was for the most part in Ottawa, did not realize that its list was not representative, but Graham, who was in London and had been based there for the previous twenty years, certainly did.

Graham's interest in the French-English dilemma heightened, as did that of most Canadians, during the Quiet Revolution. He read every book and article he could find on the subject, wrote several articles himself, and gave many speeches. In 1964, he sent his son, Richard, who was bilingual, to Quebec for the summer to travel around the province and learn what he could about Quebec and Quebecers. On his return, Graham pumped him for information. Richard, for his part, came to love Quebec and made it his home when he finished his studies at Oxford.

In addition to his involvement in public affairs, Graham was the director of several American-based oil companies operating in the Persian Gulf. It was not a role he enjoyed but, penniless and unemployable in Canada, he made the best of a bad situation. In 1942 he travelled to India with Sir Stafford Cripps to negotiate the possible independence of that country. He was in the United States a month later meeting with President Franklin Roosevelt. He hobnobbed with British royalty, attending two royal weddings and a coronation at Westminster Abbey. He played the ambassadorial role with aplomb as agent-general for Saskatchewan in Britain and Europe, and became an expert on wheat negotiations. In retirement, in recognition of his services, he received five honorary doctorates and was made a Companion of the Order of Canada. On his seventy- first birthday a party was held for him on Parliament Hill with Lester B. Pearson as master of ceremonies.

He did not, however, get what he wanted most: an opportunity to work in Canada for Canada, a seat in one of the Houses of Parliament, or an appointment that would give him a platform from which to speak publicly on the issues that concerned him most. Nevertheless, he died quietly in his sleep, a contented man – there was no bitterness, no remorse. He knew that he had made the most of the talents and opportunities that had been given to him, and that his life had been worthwhile and fulfilling.

How did that happen? How did this man manage to find himself, so often, where history was being made? How did he identify emerging issues before others did and find ways to steer their evolution in a direction that historians would later describe as inspired or prophetic? How did he develop that ability to walk with kings and dine with world leaders as if he were "to the manner born" and yet know, understand and feel the desperate plight of the Saskatchewan farmer and the unemployed worker in the depths of the drought and Depression; the despair and helplessness of the green grocer in London whose shop was bombed during World War II? How did he, when finding the obvious paths to the achievement of his goals closed before him, find other paths that would allow him to achieve his real goal – "to serve the progress of society through serving family, nation, its associates, in whatever circumstance opened to me?"

*

Graham was the eldest child of a comfortable, middle-class Protestant Ontario family. He was doted on by the whole family but especially his mother, who had high aspirations for her son. She saved every letter he wrote, sent his childish compositions off to newspapers in the hope of having them published, and took him to hear political and other speakers. When Graham was at university and working part-time as a reporter she kept a scrapbook of his articles and any article in which he was mentioned. Graham's unfinished memoirs provide the information about his childhood which follows.

The St. Thomas, Ontario house in which Graham was born, his maternal grandmother's home, always seemed to be full of people, warmth and affection. Its inhabitants had a great respect for people who held public office, and imparted this respect to Graham. The house itself Graham described as:

> *a large red-brick cube of three stories and large gardens both on the street side and to the rear. ... The vegetable and flower gardens must have been a few acres in extent but that may be a childish exaggeration. ... To the east of the house, there was a large conservatory where there was a collection of rather exotic plants, including what we were told was a century plant. At any rate, at a very early hour one morning the children in the house were roused from their sleep, and taken down to see in the conservatory a century plant. [It was] about the shape of a squash, but of course green and very prickly, and on this strange object was a brilliant pink flower.*

When Graham was four years old "Granny" Rich took him to Dr. Wilson for an innoculation. Through the doctor's office window could be seen his apple orchard, where "rich yellow apples, blown by the early autumn winds and rain, lay in scores invitingly on the green sward." The incident made a lasting impression on Graham:

> *As Granny and I, leaving the house on 118 Centre Street, for the Doctor, passed the iron tree, I had seized it, refused to go further, and grumbled. I did not like the thought of a needle being thrust into my arm, even by Dr. Wilson, even if Dr. Wilson was a Senator in Ottawa, even if he was one of the Prime Minister's friends and physicians, even if the Prime Minister was the great Sir Wilfrid Laurier. My tears called forth Granny's Scottish firmness. Did I not bear a brave Scottish first name? Did I dare to be afraid? When the needle entered my left arm, I did not wince. I was thinking of this challenge at the tieing post and of the apples. The Senator, as we left, gave me two apples, picking them off*

> *the ground himself. Granny was so pleased I had not failed Scotland that she pushed a small silver five cent piece into my other hand as we left the orchard and as we went up the path from the tieing post at the house added two further copper one cent pieces.*

*

The Spry household in Barrie, Ontario was also comfortable, but cold and aloof. Its inhabitants seemed to live more in the past than the present. There was, however, a proud history of public and military service, and a great love of and respect for books, at least on the part of Graham's grandfather.

Relations between the Sprys and Graham's mother were "not of the highest friendliness." The marriage was not met with enthusiasm, and one aunt in particular thought that the Riches of St. Thomas "were not quite as good as the parentage of the Sprys of Barrie."

Samuel Spry, Graham's great-grandfather, was, like Graham, born into the century – a century earlier, in Cornwall, England. According to family lore he arrived in Canada in 1825 with Colonel By, who built the Rideau Canal. He is buried at Burritt's Rapids, just south of Ottawa along the canal system. The Dominion Annual Register for 1886 states that Daniel Spry, Graham's grandfather, entered public service at the age of eighteen, became a post office inspector in East Toronto in 1876, and was transferred to Barrie three years later. In Toronto he was an officer with the Queen's Own Regiment and, according to Graham,

> *was ... a 33rd degree mason and a past Grandmaster of the Ontario Lodge. He was also very active in organizing and helping Mechanics Institutes throughout Ontario, and generally seems to have been a person of public spirit, literary interest, a keen sense of Canadian politics and a deep interest in the new Canadian nation which came into being at Confederation.*

Graham never knew his grandfather, the latter having died in 1896, but he thought they had a lot in common and would have enjoyed one another's company: "he had the same weaknesses, that is to say he liked organizations and pamphleteering. ... Above all he was fascinated by Canadian society and participated in just the sort of things which at the time I would have also been tempted to join."

At least once during each visit to the Spry house in Barrie, Graham would be shown first the library and then the contents of a trunk in the attic. He described the library in this way:

> *Grandfather, I remember very vividly, had what seemed to me a very large and imposing library. It was a single long room, perhaps 40 feet long and I suppose 15 to 20 feet wide. Both sides of this long room were walled with bookcases and books. Light came in from windows high above the bookshelves and from a very tall window at one end.*

> *...Grandfather's desk was in this window. It was a large desk and was kept, I was told, very much as he had left it when he died. ... I was too young to be a reader of the books in the library, but I was shown samples and at later visits when I was much older, that is to say 10 or 12, it was pointed out to me that grandfather bought books by the great writers of the Victorian era as soon as they appeared. When I came to Barrie during the war* [World War II], *I was horrified to discover that one of my aunts had been left in charge of disposing of the books when the house was sold, and that the entire library had been broken up, disposed of and sold to dealers. I had been led to believe that as the oldest of the Spry family these books, which by now at the age of 42 I could appreciate fully, would be mine.*

This loss of inheritance was perhaps another price that Graham paid for choosing to speak out in favour of socialism. Indeed, when Graham spoke in Barrie in the 1930s, the Spry family was conspicuously absent from these meetings.

The trunk contained the uniform of Captain Charles Samuel Fortier Spry, who had died at the age of nineteen as a result of an illness contracted while serving with the Simcoe Rangers in the North-West Rebellion of 1885:

> *In the trunk carefully wrapped in tissue paper or some sort of white material was a red tunic of Captain Charles Spry. I remember the red very vividly, as it was removed from the white covers, and the brass buttons. I don't remember the rank indication. I presume there were three stars on each of the epaulets. Captain Charles Spry's sword was also proudly preserved in these family possessions in the attic.*

How this family heirloom was disposed of is not known. All Graham knew was that "nothing of the Spry household was ever, that I know of, turned over to my father or mother or to myself at the time of Grandmother's death."

"Grandmother" was Marie Elizabeth Fortier before her marriage. The first Fortier in Canada – Forrestier at the time – according to family lore, was a captain of one of the four ships that brought Champlain to Quebec in 1633. One of the Fortiers was given land at St. Jean, on the Île d'Orléans, in the seventeenth century. Graham's great-grandfather Fortier was "with Brock in the army which laid siege during the war of 1812-15 to Detroit and either then or earlier a Fortier had settled in the neighbourhood of what became Windsor, Ontario." By this time a Fortier had married a de Gaspé, a name that Grandmother Spry gave to one of her daughters and that Graham in turn gave to his daughter.

Graham had no recollection of his grandmother speaking French, "nor was the fact that she was French-speaking a matter of any special note." He did recall, however, "meals at which mother suggested we should speak only French. I should say that mother's French was very little better than our own, that is to say the oral French we spoke was of the lowest level of pronounciation and vocabulary, but she did show an interest and certainly one that her children and grandchildren have respected."

*

Graham's memoirs provide almost no information about his childhood with his mother and father, his sister Constance (Conkie), two years his junior, and his brother Daniel, who was thirteen years younger than Graham. Nor does he provide any information about the upbringing of his parents.

At the time William Bigelow Spry married Ethelyn Rich in September 1898, he was working for the *Chatham Banner*. Between 1900, when Graham was born, and 1910, the family moved to Montreal, then to Toronto, back to Montreal again, and then to Winnipeg. Graham described his father as an editor and a publisher, explaining that the many moves were the result of his father's work; he does not state whether they were promotions, demotions or lateral moves. Certainly it was uncommon in those days for a man to change employers as frequently as he did.

William Spry joined the local militia wherever his newspaper job took him because, according to his son Daniel, it was the socially acceptable thing to do. He was with the Fusiliers in Montreal and with the Grenadiers in Winnipeg. He was a major when he went overseas; in 1918 he was made lieutenant colonel. When the war ended he remained in the permanent force and was first stationed in Calgary as assistant adjutant of Military District No. 13. According to Daniel, his father's reputation in the army was that of a good administrator.

In all of Graham's correspondence there are less than ten letters written to his father. All are short and formal. By comparison there are dozens written to his mother. These are long, full of personal news, love and concern for his mother's well-being. Many of Graham's letters from his mother are in his files, but there are none from his father. In correspondence to others, Graham often gives his mother's news but he rarely refers to his father. Daniel Spry stated that there was a "real schism" between Graham and their father. William Spry was authoritarian and a stern disciplinarian. Graham did not like him and broke away as soon as he could. His father, apparently, did not mellow with age. Daniel said that he, too, was frightened of his father.

When asked about his mother, Daniel said that she had attended Alma College, was a devout Anglican, a bit of a "miss goody two shoes" and very loving and warm. Graham was the apple of her eye. She imparted to Graham her own mother's interest in public figures – when Graham bought the *Farmers' Sun* in 1931, he told his mother that the paper had been owned by Goldwin Smith. He asked her if she remembered taking him to Bishop Strachan's School in 1908 to hear a lecture by Smith.

Graham also remembered being taken to the Legislative Buildings in Toronto on Empire Day and being told that the men on the bandstand were the governor general, Earl Grey, and the prime minister of Canada, Sir Wilfrid Laurier. He added: "I treasure that recollection but of course it may be a myth."

*

The Spry family lived on Sherbrooke Street, near Westmount Park, during their first stay in Montreal; they lived at 95 Bernard Avenue, in the heart of what is now called the Annex, in Toronto; and on Claremont Avenue in Westmount during their second stay in Montreal in 1909-10. According to Graham, there was little interaction between the French and the English:

> *At the south-west corner of Sherbrooke and Claremont, there was a farm with a tempting orchard owned by a French-speaking family. It is typical of the times that we did not know any of the farmer's large family of children as well as we knew his stolen apples ... The old Ontario Anglo-Saxon exclusiveness prevailed on our street: there was no hostility or difficulty; each family group was preserving its differences isolated, apart.*

During their first stay in Montreal, the Sprys had a maid, Mary Benson, who spoke with a "splendid brogue." It was Mary who introduced Graham to "two new revolutionary means of pleasure and communication":

> *She took me to her family home and played the first gramophone I had ever seen or heard – an old-time Edison with a huge horn with gilt pattern painted on it and a cylinder and needle from which music came. She also, one early evening, took me to the granite Westmount Public Library and with few others, mainly elderly, I there saw in the early 1900's, my first moving picture. I recall its theme and impact vividly. A cyclist on the highway was run over by a steam roller and the body was flattened on the ground – a following cyclist used his tire pump to reinflate the prostrate body. The body rose, it mounted the bicycle and both cyclists rode away.*

In Winnipeg, the Sprys lived on McMillan Avenue. Graham attended Gladstone Public School where, in grade five or six, he was captivated when his teacher discussed with the class parliamentary government and "the concept of [a] free, self-governing Dominion of Canada, in a world-wide association with Britain and other countries sharing developing forms of Parliamentary government." His other memory of Gladstone School was of "the unauthorized, punishable thrills of sneaking into the fire escape tube or tower, and hurtling in the darkness down three storeys, down a corkscrew of steel to fly, as the unlocking gear was hit by rushing feet, into sunlight, close to tall piles of wood for heating the school."

*

When war was declared, in August 1914, Graham's father was the adjutant of the 100th Winnipeg Grenadiers, which became the 11th Battalion of Canadian infantry at Val Cartier. He left Winnipeg on 24 August for Val Cartier and proceeded to England on the troopship *Aquitania*. He initially worked at the Canadian base at Shorncliffe, near Dover in Kent, then was sent to Witley to open another training camp for Canadian soldiers.

A year later, the rest of the Spry family moved to England to be near Major Spry. Crossing the Atlantic on the *Athenia*, Graham amused himself by assisting a few adults in the preparation of a typewritten and duplicated ship's newspaper. They landed in Liverpool, and with the assistance of a soldier sent by Major Spry to meet the ship, made their way to Folkestone, where they would remain for the duration of the war. Graham was enrolled in a small private school which he described as "rather inferior." His only recollection of these school days was that he had an eighteen-year-old teacher who introduced him to Darwin's theory of evolution: "The elementary discussion of evolution and sex therein had a shattering impact upon me and led to disturbed and sleepless nights."

In 1917, Graham was studying for his final exams when he contracted, in succession, scarlet fever and diphtheria. He was put in a military hospital and continued to study with the help of a tutor and correspondence courses. With recuperation came a feeling of restlessness. There was a war going on all around him and Graham very much wanted to be a part of it. He did not write his final exams, joining the army instead – on 5 April 1918, just forty-two days after his eighteenth birthday. His father's advice was, predictably, "be careful of the women who hang around Army camps."

The Royal Flying Corps was Graham's first choice: "All my friends were going in. And of course all the Canadians really thought it was tremendous. My class from Gladstone Public School and La Verendreye Secondary School were almost all wiped out in the Royal Flying Corps." But Graham was excluded by the rule, introduced in 1918, that recruits under the age of nineteen were not to serve in combat units.

Graham was assigned to the Army Service Corps. In his memoirs he said that he spent the last few months of the war at the Shorncliffe and Witley camps driving an ambulance. This came as a surprise to his wife, Irene – all through their married life Graham gave, as his excuse for avoiding the kitchen, the fact that he had peeled enough potatoes and washed up for enough people during the war to last a lifetime.

Being a soldier, Graham reflected years later, marked the beginning of his independence from his family:

> *The day I was called out of the thin ranks at Boudon* [sic] *and told I was being returned in a few days to Canada was a watershed. I could seize this or stay on in the army and be near Mother, Constance and Daniel and perhaps father who was expected to return from the Second Division Headquarters in France to England, to assist in administering the return of the Canadian Army to home. I could have consulted the family but decided … on my own. Canada was the choice. I then obtained two days leave of absence to say farewell to mother and the others. … There was no change in my decision…*

Graham had been away from Canada for three and a half years. He was almost nineteen years old when he decided that "Canada was the choice." Eight years later, after another absence from Canada – three years at Oxford and one with the League of Nations in Geneva – he made the same decision. He said that he was "looking about for both experience and a path into active Canadian life. Past experience had planted two seeds – fascinated and excited interest in Canada, and an ambition to be involved in Canadian affairs." It was a decision he would reaffirm many times in the years to come.

*

Graham's many friends, for the most part, were extraordinary people who made their mark, in one way or another, on society. His closest friends were involved in national affairs as career civil servants, historians, journalists or would-be politicians; but he was also friendly with people in the artistic and business communities. What is as remarkable as the breadth of these friendships is the time over which they endured.

Arnold Heeney and Graham were introduced to one another as infants. They met again at the University of Manitoba, overlapped by two years at Oxford, and visited one another in cities around the world when Arnold was with the Department of External Affairs. The friendship came full circle in retirement when they lived a block away from one another in Rockcliffe Park. Graham's friendship with King Gordon was similar: they met at the University of Manitoba, they overlapped by two years at Oxford, and they were both founding members of the LSR and the CCF. Although they later lived on different continents for many years, they corresponded and met in London and Paris. In retirement they, too, were neighbours. King read from the bible at Graham's funeral.

Graham and Eugene Forsey probably met in Ottawa in the 1920s but, if not, they certainly met at one of the first meetings of the LSR and continued to meet at CCF meetings. In the 1950s and 1960s they wrote to one another frequently, sharing information and seeking one another's advice when preparing papers and speeches on broadcasting issues, French Canada, and CCF and NDP policy.

Lester B. (Mike) Pearson was at Oxford at the same time as Graham, and they belonged to some of the same clubs, but their friendship did not really begin until they met again in Ottawa in the late 1920s, where they frequently played tennis and socialized together. Their friendship was resumed in England just before and during the first few years of World War II. At one point they took a motor trip together visiting cities and towns that had suffered bomb damage. Pearson was master of ceremonies at Graham's seventy-first birthday party; Graham was an honorary pallbearer at Pearson's funeral in 1972.

Tommy Douglas and Graham became friends in a common cause in the early 1930s, and years later, when Douglas was the premier of Saskatchewan, he made Graham Saskatchewan's first agent-general in London. He gave the eulogy at Graham's funeral. Other friendships that began in the 1920s or 1930s and lasted a lifetime included George Ferguson, who succeeded J.W. Dafoe as editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, Frank Scott, the poet and constitutional expert, Larry MacKenzie, who was at the League of Nations in Geneva with Graham and was eventually appointed to the Senate, Walter Gordon, Brooke Claxton, Vincent Massey, Norman Robertson and, of course, Alan Plaunt, with whom Graham started the CRL. Alan and his wife, Bobby, holidayed in England with Graham and Irene shortly before Alan's premature death.

Graham sat on the board of the Ottawa Little Theatre, attended soirées organized by Marius Barbeau to introduce artists to a wider audience, and bought paintings by the visual artists of the day – David Milne, Charles Comfort, George Pepper, Norah McCullough – most of which were given away as wedding gifts in the 1930s.

Gilbert Ryle, a British friend who Graham met at Oxford and who later became a philosopher of world renown, witnessed Graham's marriage in 1938. He travelled to Canada again for Graham's seventy-first birthday party; Graham attended his memorial service at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1976. Russel Smart introduced Graham to Sir Stafford Cripps in 1933. The Cripps provided a second home for Graham, especially when he was "batching it" in London before Irene's arrival, and after she returned to Canada on the outbreak of war. That hospitality was returned when Saskatchewan House became a haven for Sir Stafford shortly before his death. The Right Honourable Malcolm Macdonald, son of the British Labour leader, Ramsay Macdonald, was a friend from Oxford days until his death in 1981.

The women in Graham's life were also extraordinary and his friendships with them also lasted a lifetime. Dorothy Bell, to whom he was engaged in 1929, was the second woman in Canada to earn a pilot's license. Elizabeth Smart, the writer whose biography, *By Heart*, was published in 1991, was a very special friend of Graham's in Ottawa in the 1920s. It was to Graham that she turned when she arrived in London in the early 1940s with one child in her arms and another about to be born. The friendship endured until Graham's death. Graham met Irene, his wife of forty-five years, at an LSR skating party when Irene was teaching political economy at the University of Toronto in 1933. She taught at Cambridge after moving to London to marry Graham, and at the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Ottawa when they returned to Canada in the 1960s. She twice travelled around the world on behalf of the Associated Country Women of the World in the 1960s and 1970s and has produced scholarly books on the development of Canada. It was often said, truthfully, that Graham liked attractive women; but to him this meant intelligent and accomplished as well as physically appealing.

*

The Canada in which Graham came of age was hopeful, full of energy, and a country in which young men and women believed they could make a contribution toward its growth as an independent world power. This was manifested most clearly in the creation of many new organizations, and in some cases the revitalization of existing ones, whose mandate was to study various issues of national concern – Canadian unity and identity, Canadian autonomy within the Commonwealth, Canada's role in international affairs, to name but a few – and then to disseminate those views, to educate the public and, most important, to help set the political agenda. These associations led to the further democratization of Canada by providing the means by which groups of Canadians with a common cause could speak to their elected officials. Graham helped to create some of these organizations. He joined others, always playing an active role.

The face of Canada was changing dramatically in the first three decades of the twentieth century, although the faces of those in power then, and for a long time after, remained the same. When Graham was born the province he would represent in Britain and Europe – Saskatchewan – did not exist; nor did Alberta. The number of Canadians living on farms declined in proportion to those who lived in towns and cities – by 1921 the rural-urban balance was nearly equal. When Graham was a child almost everyone's grandparents, in English-speaking Canada, spoke with thick English, Scottish or Irish accents. At La Verendrye Secondary School in Winnipeg, he learned the derogatory terms "Bohunks" and "Dukes" used to describe the new immigrants from eastern Europe.

But it was World War I that produced the national self-confidence needed to begin building a strong, independent country. Just as being a soldier was the beginning of Graham's independence from his family, so too was fighting in World War I the beginning of Canada's coming of age. If, as Sir Wilfrid Laurier proclaimed, the twentieth century belonged to Canada, so, by implication, did it belong to the men and women who came of age around the time of the war. W.S. Wallace, in *A History of the University of Toronto, 1827-1927*, said that "among the undergraduates there has arisen since the Great War a new spirit ... a thirst for knowledge ... such as was unknown before." Ex-servicemen formed the Associated Universities Clubs and held dinners at which they invited

J.W. Dafoe and others of like mind to speak about Canadian independence or Canadian autonomy within the Commonwealth. In the 1920s they helped create the League of Nations Societies and the Canadian Institute for International Affairs, to develop a public interest in international affairs and suggest the role that Canada should play on the international stage. They also joined existing organizations like the Association of Canadian Clubs, which fostered patriotism and promoted Canadian unity. Even the CRL was a nationalist organization founded to ensure that the means by which Canadians would speak to one another and the subject matter they would discuss would be predominantly Canadian.

Pride in Canadian culture was also being manifested. The *Canadian Forum* was founded in 1920, promising to "trace and value those developments of arts and letters which are distinctively Canadian." The Canadian Authors' Association, formed a year later, promised "to use literature to articulate a national identity and to foster a sense of community within the country." When, in 1920, the Group of Seven was officially launched with an exhibition at the Art Museum of Toronto, Lawren Harris stated: "An Art must grow and flower in the land before the country will be a real home for its people."

The pride and joy was not truly national, however; World War I gave English Canadians a new-found self-confidence, but left French Canadians, upon whom conscription had been imposed, to deal with feelings of frustration and humiliation. Then, just as attempts were being made to assuage these tensions, the half-built walls of Canada came tumbling down. The market crash in 1929 and the worst depression in Canadian history forced the nation builders to re-order their priorities.

As World War I produced the national self-confidence to begin building a country, the Depression produced the direction that development would take. Graham and his friends became convinced that Canada had to adopt a much more socialist orientation and if the existing political parties were not prepared to create the structures that would prevent a reoccurrence of the pain and suffering that Canadians were enduring, then a new political party would have to be formed to do so. The LSR began the debate on a new social order, the CCF provided the political structure to articulate the views of the new Left, and a Canada, quite different from the United States, started to claim its unique place in the world.

For Graham, the fight for socialist ideals and the concerns of French-speaking Canadians were lifelong interests. In 1930, broadcasting would become another concern to which he would devote much of his time and energy. All three were among the principal issues affecting the development of Canada in the twentieth century.

1918-1922

A soldier; a student; J.W. Dafoe; first plunge into politics.

> *Pareto saw spirals, rising spirals, in the flow of events in society, I see circles in the events of my life – circle after circle, airy figures of light – returns to starting points, curves that cross and recross; friends that enter, leave, re-enter all in a moving sequence.* (Spry Memoirs. NAC, Vol. 84-9)

On the morning of 11 November 1918, Armistice Day, Graham made his way from Witley to Bramshott Camp en route to a discharge depot. He arrived just as the armistice was announced, around 11:00 A.M. The soldiers got out their musical instruments, rum and whisky appeared from everywhere, and there were great celebrations. Graham did not participate in these celebrations; he was still a teetotaler, was younger than the other soldiers, and felt apart from them because he had not been overseas. He very much envied the men who had seen combat. After lunch Graham left Bramshott Camp for Borden Camp and learned later that the celebrations had turned into near riots. The temporary stores, erected to sell to the wealthy colonial troops from Canada, were first raided and then destroyed, and the Garrison Theatre was burned to the ground.

Borden Camp was deserted. When the armistice was declared the soldiers at this camp had commandeered a train, thrown the engineer and passengers off, and taken it to London. They returned the next day, much the worse for wear, and in due course there were enough men to move by train to Buxton, where they would await a ship at Liverpool to take them home to Canada. The journey for the most part was dreary and painful. There was no sleep in the crowded, airless carriages. Near Stockport, Cheshire, the train was shunted off the line and stopped for half an hour or so by a steep embankment above a group of black, sooty textile mills:

> *Dawn was warming the sky and, as sunlight slowly spread into the gloom and shadows, we could see hundreds of young girls hurrying to the mills. ... the news spread wildly up and down the carriages. The memory of the excitement and pleasures surging almost in a moment through the troop train, remains sharply graved on my memory. A few*

> *of the lads started climbing down the embankment and soon the train was empty. Younger than most of my fellow soldiers I was slow to follow, but I did. A few girls ran for the mill gates, but most turned towards us laughing and chattering in their broad Lancashire accents, welcomed the lads. There were hand-shakes, quips, hugs, kisses, then the whistle on the train above sounded through the half-light. It was joined by the mill sirens and bells. The lads had a choice to make, the girls also. Summons followed summons from the locomotive and mill. The train slowly refilled and the mill girls settled to their tasks. My memory of the dark figures in the shadowy dawn and the whirl of emotion that surged among these young adults returning homeward from across the sea from a great war is absurdly touched by a sense of human sadness and destiny and poetry.*

Buxton, in Derbyshire, was "what was known as a watering place where (in Victorian times) the elderly and the wealthy went to take water cures, sulphur or other types of special water." The soldiers were put up in a big empty hotel or empty homes. They sat around for a few days. There were no duties or diversions. They ran out of money. The occasional marches and army entertainment troops, and the select halls of the hotel, failed to stem the growing unhappiness and ill temper of vigorous men full of energy and with nothing to do but wait. Graham was saved from boredom by a good army library. He read all day when he was not marching about in the insistent rain. "During the literary excursion I became aware that I was 'lousy.' Mere powder and expulsion by finger were of no avail. Q.M.'s store issued new 'combinations' and duly docked me their cost."

The slow idle days passed. Each day the men became more restless and the unruly elements grew stronger. Promises of a sailing date were heard but more days passed and more discontent was felt. Graham said that it was here that he learned his first lesson in the behaviour of crowds:

> *let no group of humans lie about long with nothing to do. … It was, indeed, a useful political experience teaching lessons in the behaviour of crowds and of groups of men. The role of the disgruntled … the significance of authority and its tendency towards short sighted words or deeds; the natural conflict between those with and those subject to authority's power of command … the power to be won by wise direction … the vital role of information and in its absence of distraction. … I was only vaguely learning, the lessons of leadership and mob rule. … The Winnipeg strike clarified and drove home to me these lessons when I had been discharged and was attending one of the returned soldiers special summer schools.*

Finally the men received word to be on parade with all their equipment and possessions at 4:00 A.M. They lined up in the rain and fog and stood there for hours. They were allowed to stand at ease but were not allowed to break ranks. Finally the colonel appeared. He gave a speech about how they must behave aboard ship, how they must be an honour to Canada and so on. The men waited for him to finish his oration as they were impatient to be on their way, to sail for home, as they thought, on the *Olympic*. But the colonel went on and on. Then somebody passed him a note. He read it and said, "Boys you can go back to your quarters." He explained that the engines had collapsed on the *Olympic* and that it was not sailing.

The "boys" were not happy but were consoled a little when they received their pay at noon. Things were fairly peaceful until the newspapers arrived about midafternoon. At the foot of a column was a short piece with the headline, "*Olympic* sailed this morning" and three or four lines of type stating that the *Olympic* sailed at dawn with 9,000 American troops on board. As Graham stated:

> *The lads just went mad. To have been kept out in the cold and to have the Americans who hadn't had any war to speak of – there were practically no Americans fighting in Europe in the war compared with the great armies of Britain and France or Canada for that matter. So the troops really took it pretty hard. And they went … around roaring and whooping and drinking too much and the poor MP's had an awful time. … I was too young to get into that, and half a dozen of us who were just children – we stayed out of it.*

Graham, and the others, sailed on the *Corsican*. "The Newfoundland Regiment was aboard, or part of it, and they were the best dressed soldiers of the whole allied army. … They were big people, marvellously liked aboard, and … had wonderful parties. I don't think I had ever known or seen a Newfoundlander before." The *Corsican* was an outrageous ship. Graham was down on one of the lowest levels and could hear water sloshing about in the hold. "There was no regular good food at all. The only way you got properly fed was to go up to the door of the galley and put up your dollar bill and you might get a sandwich. The staff took the food put aboard for the Canadian troops, paid for by the Canadian tax payer, and sold it back to the troops." Graham was seasick during most of the trip but he managed to write one letter to his mother. It was dated "December 21st, 1918 At Sea in sight of Land" and written on YMCA letterhead:

> *Dear Mother,*
>
> *We are touching at St. John's Newfoundland this afternoon so I am dropping you this letter to let you know about our voyage.*
>
> *We sailed the night we came on board and came around the Kent Coast, down the Channel. From there, I commenced to get sick and for a week ate nothing and though I am quite well now, I am very weak. In future wars, I am going to belong to the home guard.*

> *I am writing this letter on a messtin in my bunk – the only warm place – and you will understand that is not an ideal place for writing.*
>
> *There are six men in our "cabin" all Winnipegers and they have treated me like their own son. They have bought me lemonade, brought eatables from the table and have in every way, done all they could for me.*
>
> *Our quarters were disagreeable on account of the usual odours and with N.C.O.'s etc. to swear at you for being in bed, the trip was anything but pleasant. They however didn't worry me a great deal as I was too sick to know or care what they said. ...*
>
> *It is very cold and blowing but it is glorious to breathe brisk Canadian air again. When I came on deck to-day, the sun was shining brilliantly, the way it only does shine in Canada and the sky was the typical clear blue. It was like a tonic. I felt better in a moment.*
>
> *We hope to get to Winnipeg the day after Christmas and we'll be lucky if we do so. On arrival we immediately go on fourteen days leave and then report again for discharge. We get our pass and money on the train. ...*
>
> *As soon as I get on board the train I will write a readable letter: but I will cable when we land.*
>
> *Sending tons of love to you and to all, I remain your loving son Graham.*

When the ship reached St. John's the Newfoundland regiment was let off. The captain and the officers of the Canadian army went ashore; the privates were told that they had to stay on board. Needless to say, they were not pleased. They stood looking over the rail at the people of St. John's who were waving and shouting at them, and at the city itself. After years of blackouts, it was their first sight of a city lit up at night. Somebody thought to throw a rope overboard. It was skillfully tied by sailors on the docks and the soldiers on board slid over about six feet of water down the rope. The ship slowly emptied. Graham and a few friends wandered up the hill. Everywhere they went people gave them presents. They went by a pastry shop with a huge cake in the window. It was the size of half a kitchen table and covered in thick white icing. Graham entered the shop and asked how much the whole cake would cost. The owner said, "take it, it's yours." Graham and his friends protested but the owner insisted. So off they went down the road balancing this huge cake in their arms.

It was not long before they heard the ship's siren or whistles. The sound came from mid-harbour. Everybody rushed down to the harbour; the ship was moving out but it stopped and slowly turned back. A large part of the population of St. John's had gathered on the docks and the soldiers went meekly up the gang plank. The next morning, very early, they were called out on parade. The major in command of the ship castigated the soldiers for their outrageous behaviour. Did they realize they had deserted ship at sea in time of war? "The Armistice doesn't mean the war is over – it means that it's being negotiated to end, and I should warn you that the penalty for deserting a ship at sea in time of war is death!" The troops roared with laughter. They were then assigned to various duties, mainly carrying food up from the lower part of the ship to the Officers' Mess, while making their way slowly to Saint John, New Brunswick, where they landed on Christmas Day.

They were welcomed by members of the Independent Order of the Daughters of the Empire, who brought apples and oranges, gum and chocolate bars. The lieutenant governor went on board and made a speech; he then went down to the wharf to offer an official welcome from the province as the troops went ashore. The major in command of the army aboard the ship started down the platform with great dignity, followed by one or two officers:

> *There we were with our apples and oranges and chocolate bars and chewing gum and goodness knows what, and there was this man who had annoyed us so much, and told us we were guilty of deserting a ship at sea and death was the penalty for such an offence – so of course somebody threw an orange, and then someone else threw an orange and before the Commanding Officer of the Army aboard the ship had gotten far down the gang plank, he was being bombarded by his own troops with these missiles. He maintained a momentary dignity but he ultimately hurried and then ran – and we cheered loudly, banged our feet on the deck and shrieked with laughter.*

The troops eventually went ashore in an orderly manner and immediately boarded a train:

> *we stopped here and there across Quebec, and everywhere we stopped in Quebec there were people from the towns and villages who came out and offered food and I remember there was a whole barrel of wine rolled out at one place where we stopped for half an hour. And the local people – this was all in French – came out and they welcomed us back despite all the problems about conscription. They had a desire to welcome the troops, although they were all English speaking.*

Graham's last recollection about his life as a soldier, during this war, concerned the badge he was given on discharge; badges apparently denoted where a soldier had served. Those who had been in France with the fighting troops were given a circular buttonhole badge with a Union Jack on it. Those who reached England but did not see action were given the large, silver war veterans' badge. Soldiers who did not get overseas at all were given a smaller badge with the king's coat of arms on it. Graham inexplicably wanted the badge that was given for service in France. He was outraged and humiliated when he received the badge issued for service in Canada, because he had at least "been 'overseas' and seen zeppelins over Folkestone!" This explains why he felt entitled to the badge for service in England but it does not explain why he thought he should have one for service in France. He claimed that he actually gave some thought to going to Yugoslavia where the war was still raging, in order to get a badge for service in action but eventually solved his problem by joining the Veterans' Association. They had a little button badge bearing the Union Jack, which looked much like the one given to those who had fought in France. Apparently, this satisfied and "disguised" him.

*

The returned soldiers were welcomed home with open arms. In Winnipeg, huge crowds met the troop trains and, if the battalion was complete, it marched through the streets to its headquarters. There was a tea dance in every hotel, which provided the setting for soldiers to meet old girlfriends; soldiers who attended too many of these dances were called "tea hounds." Graham said that he never missed a dance: "If I heard music somewhere and could get away, I just walked in."

Graham stayed with his aunt and uncle, Ethel and Jim Hamilton, during the first few weeks after his arrival. He enjoyed the luxury of clean sheets and good meals, but although they made him feel welcome he soon became aware that there was something about him that they did not like: it was that his hair was worn in pompadour style – straight up and then brushed back high off the head – which apparently fitted under a military cap very conveniently. "Uncle Jim was a stern Scot from the Eastern townships and a banker, in fact he was the vice president of a bank that was absorbed by the Royal Bank in due course ... My aunt was a good old western Ontario person, you dressed properly, you spoke properly, you knew your place and you brushed your hair sensibly." Ultimately they found a way to tell Graham that they would really like him to change his hair style and look more gentlemanly. He did, back to the conventional part in the middle and combed flat on both sides.

The University of Manitoba waived prerequisites for returned soldiers and allowed them to begin classes in January 1919, provided they took a summer course to complete the academic year. Graham enrolled in the arts program and moved into the YMCA, living off his severance pay of $90 per month for three months. This he supplemented by selling subscriptions to the numerous soldiers' clubs that were formed after the war.

In the spring of 1919 Graham, along with 150 or so other returned soldiers, was recruited as a special constable. He was quite unaware of the labour discontent around him, and although the special constables were recruited with talk of "alien agitator, foreign interference," and the necessity "to cure spirit," he thought he was being asked only to work as a night watchman at the Spears and Parnell Bakery. Six dollars a day for night work that allowed time to read and study on the job had great appeal, as he was short of money.

There was labour unrest all across Canada after the war, caused by massive unemployment and inflation. This resulted in the establishment of powerful unions. When negotiations broke down between management and labour in the building trades, the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council called a general strike. Almost 30,000 workers, including public-sector employees such as policemen, firemen and postal workers, left their jobs in support of tradespeople in private industry.

The soldiers who had been recruited as special constables were armed with wooden bats – actually wheel spokes – given armbands in lieu of uniforms, and practiced marching in formation. Graham said that the strike re-associated him, as the army had done, with people and violence:

> *A few air raids in Folkestone and Herne Bay 1915-17 had taught me ... what fear meant and how to pretend calmness. But waiting for orders to march out of the police station into a huge parade and demonstration of strikers in 1919 was more frightening and disturbing than any previous or later experience, even in the London blitz or the Battle of the Gothic Line in Italy.*

On 23 June, Bloody Saturday, Graham was marching behind the first two lines of constables:

> *Some officers at the front were armed with revolvers, the soldiers carried their wooden truncheons. Ahead of the front company, was a confused mass of struggling people, of N.W. Mounted Police thrusting their horses through the disordered crowds. ... men trying to drag Mounties off their horses and somewhere there was the resounding sound of revolver fire. There was also a large group of rioters, led by a woman, pushing over a street car, tearing up the cushions and setting the stuffing alight and with this flame setting fire to the car.*
>
> *Main Street was not a distinguished thoroughfare. ... Between these larger buildings of the Anglo-Saxon community stood humble, even mean little one and two storeyed wooden buildings with shops of diverse kinds ... on the pavement level and offices and flats above. The occupants were often Slavs, Germans, and other newcomers since 1905 from Europe. These roofs were almost everywhere covered with groups of people, some originally only for curiosity, some as new or old allies of the strikers. Among these crowds on the roofs, as among the crowds lining the pavement, were individuals with weapons or missiles – and more than a few with jeers, epithets and challenges. ...*
>
> *The most immediate danger our company ran into was a man on the roof of a low shop shooting with a rifle. ... There was other shooting but the sniper on the roof is the most vivid memory.*
>
> *Our major was to the left and in front of me. He was an easily marked man. I hesitate trusting to memory but all my life I have vividly retained or vividly fabricated the story that the major was hit in the right*

> *arm and hand, pulled out his revolver with his left hand, shot at 50 to 75 feet range at the sniper on the roof; the sniper had his foot on a low wall on the roof; he reared up and fell with his rifle to the pavement 30 feet or so below.*
>
> *The major went on marching but was led away and another officer took his place.*

As the crowds thinned out the special constables became no more than lightly busy traffic wardens, not of cars but of people. Most of the crowd passed them by without either friendliness or hostility, but a few "told us what they thought of us with more eloquence and zeal than kindness or purity of language."

The special summer school for returned soldiers drew people from all levels and all ranks of the armed forces and from all over the Prairies:

> *These were survivors of a great human struggle and ordeal. ... they were in full vigour of manhood and determined by hard work to make up for the years sacrificed and the opportunities lost. I was to meet some of the same unusual breed of undergraduates at Oxford ... They were from all over the English speaking world of the British Empire and United States but in Oxford or Winnipeg the veterans of war had an identity of their own. ... I respected them and was very sensitive to the fact that I had ... only served in England.*

Graham loved the camaraderie of the men; they lived together at the YMCA, went to school together, had part-time jobs together and socialized together.

Graham did not write the exams at the end of the course, saying that his eyes were beginning to bother him. In September he had to talk fast and convincingly to be allowed to return, conditionally, to university in second year. He must have applied himself, for his exam results in December were very good. On 2 January 1920 he wrote his mother, who was now back in Calgary, telling her that he achieved second-class honours overall, with first-class honours in history and geology, adding "I did pretty well considering all the outside work that I did also."

The outside work included being editor-in-chief of the *Manitoban* – the weekly students' newspaper, "Senior Stick" – the title given to the class president, and a member of several discussion groups. Graham was not, however, "attracted to the international movement inspired by the American evangelists," nor was he among the "young men and women who pledged their lives to Christian Missions in China [and] Africa." He worked part-time as night watchman at the YMCA, where he still lived, and had acquired a girlfriend during the previous summer – Aileen Hall, a friend from grade school days. During the fall she was at school in Madison, Wisconsin, and Graham wrote to her regularly, although none of these letters are on file. They had a delightful Christmas holiday together in Winnipeg, a description of which is in the same letter to his mother in which Graham boasted of his grades:

> *On New Years Eve I went to the Riley girls' party and it was a wonderful affair. There were nearly seventy five people there besides the more mature friends of the family. The decorations were remarkable and the management of the party was perfect. The Fortunes' house is admirably adapted to use as a dance hall, the sitting room, dining room and hall forming an H of broad dimensions. The guests were largely University people and old friends and made a most congenial crowd.*
>
> *I accompanied Aileen to the affair as I have to all that occurred in these holidays. After 12 o'clock all programmes were cancelled and the girls had to make out new ones. This made it very interesting and I can now better sympathize with a girl who is left out on the chairs. It is a humiliating feeling to be left out and I felt it for the first dance. I was marooned in a distant corner far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife and everyone was dancing before I was noticed. That was the only dance I missed … Aileen asked me for three of the Leap year dances and flattered me immensely. … The dance lasted until 2:30 and with the inevitable foolishness of youth we were not satisfied. Frank, Aileen's brother, drove us down to an ice cream store … and we had hot chocolate. … I had New Years dinner at the McEachrens … It was a wonderful dinner indeed, and I never saw such a turkey. After dinner there was a sort of semi ready dance and I left about three to pay my calls. I called on the Hamiltons and the Parkers and would have gone to other places as well had I not been invited to a tea dance at the Halls. This was another wonderful affair. Aileen had invited all the "old Gang" to drop over on New Year's and we all did only expecting to pay a formal sort of a call. When we got there we found that it was a regular dance with the Fort Garry orchestra in attendance. From four till seven thirty there was a glorious dance. Ralph and I were invited to stay for supper, and by previous arrangement, Ralph, Catherine, Aileen and I went to the Walker, to see an Oliver Morosco production. … After the theatre, we all returned to the Webbs and had supper and, of course, the inevitable dance. I have never danced so much in all my life. Since eight o'clock the thirty first, up till the morning of the second, I had been to four dances, a dinner party, tea, supper and the theatre. And the theatre was the only thing that cost. I am in the enviable position of one who gets his pleasure at other peoples' expense.*

*

It was at the University of Manitoba that Graham met several people who would become lifelong friends. He also became reacquainted with Arnold Heeney, an old friend whom he had first met in Barrie when Graham was visiting his grandmother. The Heeneys moved to Winnipeg and it was on Arnold's bicycle that Graham learned to ride. "We were at the University of Manitoba together and at Oxford and in Paris in the early 20s and then Ottawa between the wars. And we met in Washington or Paris when he was Ambassador in the '50s. Before his death I and Irene lived on the slope above MacKay Lake in Rockcliffe and his house [was] on the plateau immediately above us in the late '60s."

Graham inherited the editorship of the *Manitoban* from King Gordon, who also became a lifelong friend. King was a brilliant student, the son of the Reverend C.W. Gordon, later moderator of the Presbyterian Church and world famous as the author of a number of Canadian novels under the name of Ralph Connor. Graham and King spent two years together at Oxford and holidayed together in Europe between terms. In Canada in the early 1930s they were both founding members of the League for Social Reconstruction, and both were heavily involved in the formative years of the CCF. They visited each other over the years in the capitals of the world, and resumed a close friendship in Ottawa in retirement.

The *Manitoban* was a monthly publication under King Gordon. When Graham was appointed editor in December 1919, he turned it into a weekly and in January 1920 it briefly became a daily. The three dailies in Winnipeg – the *Free Press*, the *Tribune*, and the *Telegram* – had either been refused their supply of newsprint or were going to be charged an exhorbitant sum of money for their supply and so, for a time, they all simply stopped publishing. Graham seized this opportunity and quickly turned the student paper into a daily. Hundreds of students were provided with bundles of the paper which they sold on the street corner at 5¢ each. The flat-bed press could not keep up with the demand; for a few days about 30,000 copies a day were being printed. Graham quickly realized that he had taken on more than he could handle. The revenue generated in those few days, however, provided him with enough money to run the paper, as a weekly, for the next year. The *McGill Daily*, which boasted that it was "the only daily student newspaper in Canada," removed this claim from its masthead, giving the *Manitoban* credit for being a daily, even if only for four days.

Through his work on the *Manitoban* Graham met J.W. Dafoe, editor of what was then the *Manitoba Free Press*, later renamed the *Winnipeg Free Press*. He is described in the *Canadian Encyclopedia* as "one of the most influential Canadian journalists in history." Dafoe became Graham's mentor, although their first meeting was not auspicious. The Associated Universities Club was formed by university graduates who were exservicemen. Its members would meet for dinner every few weeks and usually invited a guest speaker to address them. Graham covered the speech that was given at one of these dinners in February 1920:

> *the speaker was no less a person than J.W. Dafoe himself, the great liberal editor – the "Voice of the Prairies." I knew him by sight, but I hadn't met him but I reported his address which of course was about Canadian independence or Canadian autonomy within the Commonwealth ... This was the spirit of the time. It was fascinating to hear this*

> *champion with his great command of the situation and of the language set out his political position, one that influenced the whole of Canada and made him of course a great ally and friend of Mackenzie King.*

In his report Graham described Dafoe as "the Editor of a newspaper formerly published in Winnipeg," alluding to the fact that the *Free Press* had quit publishing for a time. He thought this was a great joke.

A few months later, Graham was looking for a summer job. He had investigated several possibilities but none had materialized so he went to the *Free Press*, introduced himself to the news editor, Wilson Blue, and said that he was the editor of the university newspaper and was interested in journalism. When Graham gave his name Blue thought a second, reached into the lower right-hand drawer of his wooden desk, dug through some papers, and pulled out a piece: "That's it – Graham Spry. Well, it's what I thought. You upset the Chief. He was really angry but he said he wanted to see you. I'll see if he's in." He left the office, came back in a few minutes and said, "the Chief is in and he says he's going to see you but you're not going to like it." Graham was not anxious for a confrontation but he was anxious to meet Dafoe:

> *So I went in to see J.W. Dafoe … He looked at me and turned his head down in a rather bull-like manner. His hair was, what shall I say, a rust colour. It wasn't red, it wasn't brown, it was something very Scottish – or perhaps it was Dutch, because he had Dutch blood in him I'm told. He looked at me. He didn't say anything. Finally he said "sit down." Then he said "Now your name's Spry." He leaned down and got a scrap of paper and he said "Now look, let me read this to you -- this is your paper –" I said "Yes, it's not mine, it's the students', but I did write an article if that's what you're referring to." He said "Yes, I just see you referred to me as an Editor of a newspaper formerly published in Winnipeg. Do you regard that as accurate? Do you think of that as good journalism?" And I said that I thought it was quite accurate at the time or some words like that. "And you come to me, having written this sort of stuff about me, you come to me and to my paper and ask for a job – do you think you're going to get it?" … then he said "Well, I'm thinking it over as I speak – you go and tell Wilson that I'll try you out and it will be $100.00 a month." Well, this was a fortune! I was earning more than married men in the news room. And people were quite upset about it, this whippersnapper.*

Graham was to work for the *Free Press* until shortly before he left for Oxford in the fall of 1922. Dafoe was kind to him, always giving him time off before and during exams.

During that first summer, in 1920, Graham was the labour reporter. It was a year after the Winnipeg strike but there were still labour problems and rivalries between the Industrial Workers of the World, which was supposed to be deeply influenced by the Communist party, and the American Federation of Labour. Graham organized a debate between the two unions. The debate was held in a big hall in Winnipeg; hundreds of people turned up and it was a total "scoop."

In the summer of 1921 Graham worked, as a volunteer for A.B. Hudson, an Independent Liberal who won the Winnipeg South seat in the federal election. Graham was asked to speak at a big political rally during this campaign. It was his "first plunge" into active political work. The speech was "unspectacular" but he loved seeing himself quoted in the newspapers, saying it gave him a "dangerous thrill of pleasure." Hudson congratulated him on his speech, adding, "It was a very promising beginning for what I am sure will be a very useful public career."

*

One evening, in the winter of 1921, while working as night watchman at the YMCA, Graham was reading John Richard Green's *A Short History of the English People,* in which there was a chapter on English universities. He became interested in the possibility of attending university in Europe. He ran up to his room and looked in the university calendar to see what scholarships were available. King Gordon had been awarded the Rhodes Scholarship for 1921 and Arnold Heeney was applying for 1922. Graham decided that night that he too would make application, listing Dafoe as one of his referees.

When the announcement was made, in November 1921, it was Graham who won. He was delighted for himself but sad for Heeney. The letter, addressed to "My dear Spry" from Chester Martin, Secretary, Rhodes Scholarship Committee, said, in part:

> *It is a pleasure to say that your public spirit and initiative and pluck have created a very strong impression; and you will find that every member of the Committee will follow your work with a very close and I think, almost a personal, interest.*
>
> *It is an especial pleasure for an old Rhodes man to congratulate you not only upon your work hitherto, but upon the good fortune that now awaits you at Oxford.*

Heeney won the Rhodes Scholarship the following year.

*

There are very few letters to or from Graham, in his papers, up to this point in his life. Those that do exist – one to his grandmother and three or four to his mother – are the originals, which suggests that his mother saved them for him. She may also have saved the only two letters in the general correspondence files – one from the secretary of the Rhodes Committee and one from Hudson.

Beginning in May 1922, however, there is a profusion of letters, mostly to friends, including Aileen Hall, who was still in Madison, Wisconsin, and with whom Graham had a special friendship. These letters were typed and carbon copies of the originals were filed. Graham apologizes in one letter for using a typewriter, explaining that legibility was "at least as essential, if not as agreeable, as courtesy." We can thus assume that his earlier letters were handwritten and therefore not carbon copied. Those he received were for the most part not saved.

During the 1921-22 academic year Graham gave up the editorship of *The Manitoban* and became involved in the establishment of the Zeta Psi fraternity. He moved into the "Zete" fraternity house sometime during the school year.

Graham had planned to go home to Calgary shortly after convocation, which his mother and sister, Constance, attended, to spend his last summer with his family before leaving for Oxford. He gave up his job on the magazine section of the *Free Press*, which he described as "interesting work, ... fiction, poetry, history, editing, rewriting, writing; work I love." But when the Winnipeg crew asked him to row for them "in the junior eight, two seat," he postponed the trip home for a month or so and found another job – as assistant manager, at $35 per week, in the campaign office of the Progressive party (which would eventually merge with the Liberals). A provincial election had been called for the middle of July. He told Aileen, after a week on the job, that "Being a politician is exhilarating, interesting, hectic, and so akin to my temperament that I feel that I have dropped into a nook carved to fit me, and for which I was destined."

Graham started rowing for the university crew in the spring of 1921 and loved it. In 1922, the crew competed in Madison, Wisconsin, where Aileen showed Graham the sights between races, and in Duluth, Minnesota. Back in Winnipeg they competed against the Winnipeg crew. In all, Graham's crew won five of six races. When the university crew disbanded for the summer, the Winnipeg crew recruited Graham and two others to row for them in the Northwestern Regatta, at Kenora, on the 22 July weekend. Training was his "predominant occupation"; he rowed daily, maintained a strict diet, and was in bed by nine-thirty or ten most evenings. He informed his mother that he weighed, stripped, 152 pounds; in rowing clothes, 154 pounds, and that he was "looking forward with great pleasure to the race. A good hard race satisfies the soul like nothing else but poetry." The Winnipeg Junior Eights lost their two races in Kenora. Graham was disappointed but not disheartened. King Gordon, who was home from Oxford for the summer, told him about the joys of rowing on the Isis that awaited him at Oxford.

From Calgary, Graham wrote to Lawrence (Laurie) Phinney, another of his lifelong friends, who later became a lawyer in Winnipeg:

> *My plans for Calgary included playing golf, studying constitutional history, shorthand, writing innumerable world masterpieces, a play for the dramatic society, editorials for both Calgary papers, dancing every Friday and Saturday as well as on other opportunities, and the*

> *organization of newspaper clippings and snapshots. I have not seen a golf course, secured a history book, thought of shorthand, attempted universal literary successes, started a play, considered an editorial, danced, or touched the clippings. For the first few days, I nursed a flourishing crop of streptococci on the posterior, walked around on my hands, because my feet were so blistered, and hid my head in shady corners of the house because my lip had grown to the size of a watermelon – and of similar hue. … Such sir, is the reward of one who pursued the evanescent W. … Today … I am going with my little sister to Banff, for the weekend. … I find the family much the same, Daniel, however, developed into a typical boy, falling into rivers, ripping trousers, and never washing his ears.*

In another letter to Laurie, dated 5 September, Graham said, "For one solid month I have done nothing – grown fat, lazy and stupid." He then found a job for a few weeks at the *Morning Albertan*, at $30 a week. He left Calgary on 20 September, stopping for a few days in Winnipeg to say good-bye to friends and to make arrangements with Dafoe to send articles back to the *Free Press*. He visited friends and relatives in Toronto before taking the train to New York from where he would sail to England with a group of American Rhodes Scholars on the *Aquitania* – the same ship his father took to England in 1914. In a letter to his mother from aboard ship he gave his impressions of New York:

> *Central park is beautiful but does not compare with Hyde park – nor is there anything to compare with London in anything I saw in New York… I can also say … that I did not see at anytime any woman who could claim a remote right to call herself pretty or beautiful. … I had dinner with the American Rhodes men at the Yale club… The dinner was a dull affair, livened by not a single speaker … no one threw out any thoughts worth keeping. … The American men vary – they are as mixed as the country they come from. … but altogether, they are rather a good bunch, and were hearty in their welcome to me.*

*

In 1927, Graham kept a diary in which he looked back on his years at the University of Manitoba and tried to make some sense of his relationship with Aileen Hall. This quotation follows a long entry, recorded at a later point, in which he describes his views on sex:

> *This slowly gained knowledge of sex has helped me to an appreciation of the most vivid emotional experiences I have had, and particularly to an understanding of that precious and ethereal attachment to Aileen Hall. That attachment endured, at least, three years. It lived even during my first year at Oxford and only when it somehow became stained by imagination, did it pass as an influence from my life. A year ago, when I met Aileen after four years of absence, … agreeable and interesting though the encounter was, it was utterly devoid of deeper interest. The attachment, her influence, was dead and cold and gone, utterly, utterly*

gone. Such influence as remains, such attachment as there is, is the influence, the attachment of a memory. ...

I recall that I returned to Canada eagerly, full of ambition to conquer anything; ambitious politically, and overflowing with a now lost energy. ... Law was, then, my aim and the aim of law was politics and the aim of politics was power and prominence, and the aim of these was vague, humanitarian reform and vanity satisfied. I conceive the myself of that time as an ingenuous and very obnoxious boy, happily less obnoxious because so ingenuous. My absorbing selfishness and ambition seems to me now, almost delightful. It must have made men about my age either laugh at me or loathe me. ...

My army experience had classified woman into bad and pure. ... I was, in other words, aged 15 or 16 in my outlook upon the other sex and the world in general.

Thus was my world when Aileen Hall returned to it, in a Dodge car. I saw her from the West's car and recalled her from grade eight days. She had changed, indeed. A few years at an American girls' school had given her herself. She was trimly dressed. Her hair was done up in the very neat style of the day. She was aloof, calm, dignified yet welcoming and friendly. Her features were well moulded, well-proportioned. She was a classical type. She had none of the burning American energy. Her accent was rather Bostonian, even southern. Thus she was when I met her.

She stood out from her companions and set the standard for them, or indeed any group in which she was found. Her command of situations was extraordinary. If she had been a man, she would have been a leader, not by force, cleverness, ruse, but because she would have been taken for a leader at once. ...

I was most instantly a follower, and never knew it. It took me three years, indeed, to realize what a follower I was.

There it began. For nearly four years it endured. When Aileen went to Madison, I wrote to her every day for two solid months. Her mother stopped me. When she was in Winnipeg for Easter or Christmas, I would see her at least every day. I ... counted the days till she arrived and was irradiated with a strange, sweet joy so long as I was near her. It was really a beautiful experience. I told her everything of hopes, fears, ambitions in me. She gave a unity to the whole life I was leading, was the eye I wanted to catch in anything I did, was the rewarding smile alone I sought. In her presence, I was always shy. Indeed, I was almost embarassed by her. ... In her presence, I was impossibly serious and I suffered agonies trying to escape from my embarassment. To dance with her was a joy watched for, waited for, with an eagerness unexampled in any other sphere of my existence. ... The thought before, the recollection after, were ecstatic. Yet the dance itself found me awkward, shy, clumsy.

There was none of the abandon and ease of the dance. I was afraid even to clasp her fairly. Indeed, I danced more easily, more happily with any other girl than Aileen.

She appeared to me to belong to a wealthy and perhaps elect circle in Winnipeg. She lived in a large house on the Crescent and drove several cars. These things were important to me then. I had very bourgeoisie standards, then, and had not learned to scorn the mock elite or doubt the existence of an elite altogether. …

The joys and terrors of such emotional experiences were certainly mine. Yet powerful though the attraction was, there was not an ounce of apparent sex or desire in it. That impulse was perfectly sublimated. The barest suggestion of serious affection filled me with intense annoyance. I never kissed her until the decline had begun. I never made even the slightest advance. …

Of ordinary romance, there was none. Aileen was not real to me. Indeed, I could not visualize her and she was almost a vague form like a thought. … She was predominantly a thought. As a being, I saw her but at intervals and those intervals served but to fan the flame. …

A precious and sweet few years. Such periods of illusion are finer than the more violent illusion of mature love. …

I cannot, of course, gauge the outlook of Aileen. She was encouraging for, at least, the first year. She encouraged me to write to her. … She gave me her picture – demurely and after decorous resistance. …

But she more quickly lost it. … She had grown up. I had not. She became conscious, and studious, I remained blind and ingenuous and sincerely because absorbingly Platonic.

This experience fanned me to a glow of energy white in intensity. I felt there was nothing I could not do. I had supreme confidence and no doubts. I had all the conceit and arrogance and self-confidence of youth magnified. … as my sublimated attraction disappeared, it left a desert. For a brief period, an oasis watered by tears and regrets, appeared. … the real blast that destroyed that fine, rhythmically constructed and delicately balanced temple or vision was the arrival of the consciousness of sex, of marriage. Through it ran the ice of my childish view of sex, my horror of it, my recoil from it as unclean. … Thus died the sublime emotion aroused, or invoked or evoked by a friendship, at once visionary, illusory, yet while it endured, real enough in its influence, great enough in its power.

1922-1926

Oxford; rowing; travels in Europe; Fleet Street; the League of Nations.

> *It was I think the 5th of October 1922 … towards late afternoon – four or five o'clock, that I had my first sight of Oxford – the spires and towers against the bright sky and the clouds above. If I had been a painter I could have painted it then and there and I could paint it now – it's so vivid in my memory. It was a great and thrilling experience – one that I will never forget. That feeling of Oxford, its beauty and its history and its dignity certainly remain forever. …*
>
> *The college was a great institution, it gets into your being and if you have loved it as most people do it really becomes the centre of your life not temporarily, it's the most enduring, positive experience. The life is so concentrated, it isn't going to a college and then going somewhere else and getting away from the whole university. The whole of the day is your life and it's a university life – totally absorbing. You meet a great many people … you tend to know a man who is also writing an essay each week on history, he happens to be rowing also, you see him six days a week for a whole afternoon when you're rowing and you meet him in the library and so on so there becomes an intimacy and a communion which is a vivid thing in one's life all the time. It lives forever. And it's all the richer because there are people from all over the world and on the whole ruthlessly hand-picked.* (Spry Recollections)

Lester Pearson, who was at Oxford in 1921 and 1922, agreed with Graham. In Volume I of his memoirs he said, "Oxford University, and St. John's in particular, turned out to be all that I had hoped and dreamed. Seldom are expectations so completely fulfilled as were those of my two years at Oxford."

Carrying his two suitcases, and "with some little caution and some little fear," Graham entered the gates to University College on High Street and was duly shown through the principal quadrangle, through the next quad and over a little bridge to a building that dated to the reign of Edward the Confessor. Graham's quarters were located on the top floor of a three-storey building; they consisted of two rooms but were always referred to as a "room." The main room was of a reasonable size, furnished with bookshelves and a large table, with windows looking out on the old college to the west; off this was a very small bedroom.

Every staircase had a college servant, known at Oxford as a "scout." The scouts looked after the residents – the undergraduate students – and played an important role in helping them, especially the students from overseas, to assimilate into the ways and language of Oxford.

After unpacking, Graham went for a walk: "There was a great deal to see – the hall, the library, the chapel, the gardens, the master's gardens – you only peeked into those places – and then there was a beautiful late Gothic door with arches and it made a vivid impression on me. In fact I've almost always had a postcard of it around wherever I've lived in the years since."

That evening, about 200 men gathered in the hall for dinner. There were ten long tables and, at the end of the hall, a dais on which was the head table where the dons, teachers and professors sat to the right and left of the master of the college. Before sitting down the master said grace in Latin. Graham was at a table with eight or ten others and discovered very quickly that not one of them was "a local product." They were from all over the British Empire and elsewhere. "There was a certain amount of shyness, but there was great relief to discover that we didn't have any of these strange beings known as Englishmen. We got to like them very much but they were a little different in their approaches than someone from Australia or an American state or Manitoba."

The basic teaching method was tutorial. Once a week each student met with his tutor, read aloud the essay that had been assigned the week before, and discussed the essay, including possible source materials, that would be due the following week. "You turned up at his study, usually a very untidy study and you tripped over stacks of books along the floor as you arrived." Graham was studying modern history. His tutor in the first year was a Scot by the name of Kenneth Leys. He was a small man, had a splendid Scots accent, and had been a captain in the Scottish infantry with the 29th British Division. He and Graham became good friends, but not before he put Graham in his place.

During their first or second meeting, Leys assigned Graham an essay on the social forms prior to feudalism in pre-Norman England. He then suggested reference books which Graham might use. Graham wrote down book after book after book. In some cases they were volume sets of three or more. Finally Graham asked if this reading list was for one term or for the whole year. Leys glared at him and said, "What sort of institution do you think you have come to Spry? Those are for learning, not just for reading. These are the books you should use in preparing this essay *by next week!*"

Sports were a fundamental part of university life at Oxford. Graham's sport was rowing. His college crew competed against his Canadian friends – Arnold Heeney, King Gordon and others whom he met at Oxford; Norman Robertson who rowed for Balliol, and Frank Scott who rowed for Magdalen. Lester Pearson did not row; he played hockey.

In a letter to Laurie Phinney, Graham described the setting in which rowing races took place at Oxford – not what one who has seen rowing on television during the summer Olympics would expect:

> *They have a strange form of amusement in Oxford. Near the college, there is a little creek, like the Seine, which when dammed and put on the map, is called a river. … Now, this river is almost too small for swimming. In fact, swimming is forbidden lest someone should take away all the water in their bathing suit. But this being forbidden they have another sport. Four or eight men get in a boat with long poles, and another man, without a pole yells at them. This makes them splash a great deal and finally the boat moves. Sometimes several boats start off at once, and try to hit each other or get to a certain spot first. When this complication is introduced scores of noisy men (the silent restrained English men you read of but never see) run along the side of the river, firing revolvers, yelling like fury and the poor men in the boats splash harder than ever. This is called racing, and the form of racing is called rowing. … I do not want to surprise you, but I sometimes take part in it.*

King Gordon, in his review of Frank Scott's biography, described how races were conducted:

> *Put briefly, the Isis at Oxford is too narrow for several boats to race side by side. In consequence the eights of the twenty-odd colleges – and some have two – line up one behind the other in three divisions, with a boat length of open water between each boat. When the pistol goes, all boats start, the purpose being to catch the boat ahead and keep away from the boat behind. Your success or failure determines your position next day. The races go on for six days during Eights week each year.*

The object is to "bump" the boat ahead of you, move up the river to the next position, and eventually become "head of the river."

Clubs were also an integral part of life at Oxford, mostly political or debating clubs. Prominent people in England, and indeed from all over the world, would be invited to speak or debate issues, and the students themselves would hone their debating skills at these clubs. The Union was one of Graham's favourites. It was a public club to which anyone could belong and featured a good library and reading room, with newspapers and magazines from every country; even the *Free Press* was there. The Ralegh Club, another favourite, started in the days when Vincent Massey was an undergraduate at Balliol College and consisted of people from the dominions. Its purpose was to promote discussion on "empire" politics. Membership was limited to about five people from each of the dominions. J.W. Dafoe, who was a great champion of Canadian self-government but also a great believer in the Commonwealth, attended the

Commonwealth Conference in London in 1923. At Graham's invitation he addressed the Ralegh Club, explaining the Canadian point of view on imperial affairs. Graham also joined both the Liberal and Labour clubs "to find out where my prejudices were developing."

In a letter to Dorothy Bell, a friend in Winnipeg (to whom he would become engaged in 1929), he described a debate at the Union between the writer, Beverley Nichols, and Dean Inge on the subject of Victorianism:

> *It was a wonderful evening. Dean Inge made some rare remarks, but talks and looks like a stage curate. ... Nichols was the best speaker of the evening, witty, finished, clever, feeling his audience all the time, and never faltering in thought, word or deed. He, though hated, took the Union by storm. ... But those who came to scoff remained to admire.*

King Gordon invited Graham to his first Eaglets dinner, a club to which undergraduates could be elected. There he met Gilbert Ryle, who was to become an internationally renowned philosopher.

Graham described his life at Oxford as an "almost totally male" experience. Socializing with women was discouraged by the university. He told his mother that he "met Alice Harriot, another Canadian, from Winnipeg, and she asked me to a tea dance, Saturday afternoon, which I attended and enjoyed, but felt I was guilty of a sad breach of Oxford tradition. I must admit, however, that the change from the frequent gaiety of Manitoba, to the total absence of it here, sometimes strikes one." In another letter written in February 1923, to Muriel Smith in Winnipeg, in which he mentioned that he was going to a dance at one of the female colleges he further explained: "They [the dances] are permitted one a term, and all colleges hold them the same evening. (Hence, one may only go to one dance a term, all other dances being banned, and watched by university policemen.)"

Graham's normal day consisted of "four hours reading in the morning, after duly attending chapel or signing the roll book and eating a peaceful breakfast alone" in his room. Lunch, then rowing on the river; tea, then another two hours of reading or talking; then hall – "the one public meal, conducted with due formality, Latin grace, and gowns complete; then more reading, talking or listening. This may be done in one's sitter, alone or with friends, or in one of the several colossal libraries nearby, or in some club."

In November Graham wrote to a fraternity brother in Winnipeg to say that he was:

> *still in the ecstatic stage, and will probably remain there, as far as my personal love for Oxford goes. ...*
>
> *But in study, rowing and debating, I have been undergoing a deflation process which is truly valuable. In study, my Canadian newspaper style of speech, and the pure Manitobanese that I use in essays, are being*

> *eradicated, and my tutor, though rather hopeless about me, and "Americans" in general, concedes me some faint hope. In rowing, I have been thoroughly deflated and am on the rise again. I spoke at a college debate, once, and felt so little at home, that I lost confidence and courage for a month. However, it returned, and I spoke again last week, and am second speaker for the affirmative in a debate next week – on the Oxford system, I have not summoned up courage enough to speak at the Union, but will do so next term. By that time, I think I will know the feeling of Union audiences more or less, and know what sort of speech is expected.*

*

The academic year consisted of three eight-week terms beginning in October and ending in June. The holidays between terms, called "vacs," were about a month long and the summer vacation was about three months in duration. Anyone with academic ambitions "read" during vacations. Reading parties were organized and several students would travel together, usually to continental Europe where there were other things to do and see, but where it was also much cheaper to live than in England. The group might consist of students from one college or a mixture from several colleges, all studying the same subject. Everyone packed a suitcase full of books and these were exchanged with other members of the party. They stayed in boarding houses or inexpensive hotels, depending on the accommodation that was available. The routine would be to study in the morning, get together for lunch, study again in the afternoon, and then go for a walk in the evening and stop for a drink in one of the cafés.

In December 1922 Graham went to Avignon with an American friend, Tom Brockway, and George Ferguson from Alberta, to "save money, give myself a little sounder grounding in old English history than I have ... and also, acquire a grounding in French conversation." He stopped in Paris and his Christmas letters home were full of observations of his first visit to the continent. He told his sister, Constance, now nineteen, about the opera he attended in Paris:

> *The opera music was wonderful but hardly more interesting than the audience. I was sitting in 35 cent seats, and not among the elite, but could see the wonderful costumes that were being worn in the promenade between the acts. Everything in Paris now is armless, even the dresses worn down town in the morning. Skirts are very long, and the dress loose, generally.*

He visited the Louvre, where he found the Venus "sublime" but "failed to appreciate" the Mona Lisa, and climbed the Eiffel Tower to the first landing, the elevator being frozen.

In Avignon, Graham and Brockway (Ferguson found lodgings elsewhere) stayed in the home of Mme. Foure, a former professor at the

French Lycée, on the rue des Teinturiers. He described the house and his routine to his mother in letters written on 17 and 24 December:

> *Our house is as ancient as the town and was built out of an old monastery. ... The house, itself, was occupied by Petrarch ... and there is a secret chapel in the walls just behind my bed. A mill stream with many mill wheels runs by the house, and to enter one must cross a small bridge. The whole scene and atmosphere is antique, quaint, and interesting.*
>
> ***
>
> *The daily routine consists of three and a half hours work in the morning between nine and twelve thirty. A long walk to some spot of interest or beauty with Brockway and Ferguson every afternoon, varying in length ... ending with chocolate or café in the Rue Republicain. From three or four to seven-thirty, more studying, and usually an hour or so in the evening, then, read French for an hour, write a little on the typewriter, or read some Avignon book or newspaper. ... It is now just midnight, and Christmas has begun. Shortly, the madame and the mademoiselle will return from the midnight mass, and the "réveillon" will begin. This celebration, so far as I have ascertained consist of eating oysters, drinking champagne, and singing. Oysters I like mildly, champagne, I fear, and singing, I dare not, but despite the initial weaknesses in the approaching meal, I am sure I shall enjoy myself.*

Graham did not sing at the "réveillon" but a week later, on New Year's Day, when he was asked again to sing he recited, in deep monotones, to the fascination of the elderly women present, the University of Manitoba yell: "*I jai itakai kai yai yip; Manitoba, Manitoba, rip rip rip,*" explaining that it was a savage poem of the Canadian Prairies.

The news to his father was of a political nature:

> *France shows none of the signs of suffering that England shows everywhere. England is full of beggars. Oxford streets, at all hours, have men asking help, or playing tin whistles, for a living – able bodied men with ribbons... France, on the contrary is full of soldiers, and everywhere I go I see more of them. ... There are no beggars... Taxes are light, and industry, which is 75 percent agricultural has quickly got into normal. ... Though the papers are always throwing stones at Germany or England, one being as bad as the other, they are mainly cheerful in other things. ... My first term at Oxford was a genuine delight, and I am quite satisfied with it. I have made many friends, though no intimates, have been started well in rowing, and in debating.*

*

The winter term began in the third week of January and training for the "torpids," the bumping races scheduled to take place the last week of February, began at about the same time. Rowing was the principal subject in all of Graham's letters. On 10 February he told Muriel Smith that "Tonight, we break training. The custom seems ridiculous to me. Just two weeks before the final test, we are instructed to intoxicate ourselves, lest we should be overtrained. This is a request never refused in Oxford." His letter to Arnold Heeney included advice about Oxford as well as the results of the races:

> *Torpids have passed, the week of racing is over, and with it the necessity of going to bed early, rising early, rowing all afternoon, and eating, it would seem, a very large proportion of the time. Univ. did well in the races, and is one of the three crews which have been awarded oars. We made four bumps, in the first division, and moved from ninth to fifth place on the river, a performance that the Torpid has not equalled since ten years ago, when it made seven bumps. … The oar, needless to remark, is a joy to anyone, but to one who has a taste which weakly, but unavoidably runs to such external signs of prowess, it is joy itself. … The college, moreover, is entitled to a bump supper for making four bumps, for winning the track cup, and other athletic successes. … (I refrain from telling you the sordid details of a Univ. Bumper – Bacchus knows only envy on such an occasion)…*
>
> *Hasted tells me you expect to get into St. John's. It has many advantages, and is academically good, especially in history. … It is coming on in rowing, and made several bumps this year. It takes more interest in the Union than most colleges do, and has several officers at the present moment. I am told that the college officers do not like Canadians, but I cannot believe that to be correct, especially as the most active man in St. John's playing for football, rugby, track, hockey and other teams is Pearson of Toronto, who also plays lacrosse and hockey for the university. …*
>
> *Prof. Martin, and all good Oxon men will tell you to mingle with the Anglais, which is good advice, but I am coming more and more to think that perhaps Canadians emphasize that side too much. The value of association is the testing of attitude, and the exchange of views. It leads, however, in some cases, to making the Canadian attitude English, and the exchange of views an exchange of being a Canadian for being an Englishman. Particularly, does that apply to the academically successful, or the socially successful in Oxford. The Canadian who takes a first has many opportunities open before him in England, and often he stays. The temptation is great, and the rawness of Canadian life is exaggerated, perhaps, by distance which does not always lend enchantment – and the result is that Canada loses what is hers. So the idea I now govern myself with is to read everything with a view to application in Canada, and I aim not to be a typical and good Oxonian, but a typical and better Canadian.*

Graham expressed the same views, about opportunities for Canadians in England, to his mother and told her that he had "come to a fairly definite decision to return to Canada when my scholarship expires"; that he felt indebted to Canada, "the community which gave him his opportunities"; and that, immediately after Oxford, he would "like to gain some experience either on an English newspaper, or in some English government office, but … only as experience and not as an occupation."

When a fraternity brother, Eddie Cunningham, wrote to Graham to ask him to consider missionary work in China, Graham replied:

> *I assure you, Eddie, that the missionary spirit you ask me to have towards China exists as a spirit but is not directed towards China. This is a stirring age, and it is Canada's century. And every Canadian who has university training and all who feel the spirit calling, should take a share in realizing the destiny that is Canada's. You, no doubt, saw China on every page of your medical text books. I see Canada in every history I open and I can only hope that my spirit for that ideal will be as sincere and active as yours for your ideal. We all have our parts to play, but I do not think, however much you think I should, that China is in my field.*

*

Easter vacation was spent with two South African friends in Brussels, where room and board was "about a dollar a day" and where they went to La Traviata at the opera. "We three went in dinner jackets, taking our standards from Paris and Oxford. Bruxelles was there in rags and sabots. The building is very fine, but grand opera with a bad audience which applauds in the wrong place, and looks like a mob, is like sipping nectar out of a flower pot."

They also travelled outside Brussels to visit some of the sites of battles – old ones like Waterloo where "the battlefield is simply a field, with a mound and a lion to mark it," and a more recent one, Vimy Ridge:

> *We walked slowly along the road, and were able to linger, now at a graveyard where every wooden cross or stone monument bore the names of Canadians and Canadian regiments, now at a dug-out, not quite ruined by five years of wind and rain, now, wander through trenches half filled in, or stop to examine the rifles clustered in the mud, to dig out shell noses, bombs, even, bones.*

It was just after Graham's return from Vimy Ridge, Ypres, Passchaendale, Sanctuary Wood and Hoogg, where the "burying parties are still at work," that he wrote to Dafoe, enclosing an article on "a Canadian subject, the problem of which seems to me clearer, though not easier, after moving about in other countries." He added that he had "acquired a very great dread of 'nationalism'" but retained "a realization of the necessity of nationhood for Canada." Nationalism seemed to him to be "the root of European evils, while nationhood is obviously the great hope of Canada."

A few weeks later Graham wrote to J.S. Woodsworth, thanking him for copies of some speeches in Hansard. He sent Woodsworth a copy of the Oxford labour paper, edited by Malcolm Macdonald (Ramsay Macdonald's son), gave him a brief assessment of the Labour Club, and added:

> *As usual, Oxford is the home of lost causes, a cause to which I, wavering between labor and liberalism, doubtfully belong. It is no exaggeration to say that as much as any movement may be predominant in Oxford, the labor movement is predominant, and socialism is strong. Personally, I have no founded convictions. I am reading history, now, and after that I am going to examine my own mind and the conditions which it will have to deal with.*

In June, University College disgraced itself in the rowing races, but this was quickly forgotten when Graham was elected to the Ralegh Club. He boasted to his mother:

> *There are clubs and clubs in Oxford, some social, some intellectual, some public and known, some private and respected. The Liberal club is political, intellectual and public. Anyone may join it. But the Ralegh club is private and one must be elected to it, and with those who know it, it is respected. And some say, it may or may not be true, it is the best club of its kind in Oxford, and the club most intimately in touch with the political life of the empire. I believe that is no exaggeration, and having been elected to the only colonial vacancy, feel more than elated, especially as my tutor is responsible for it, and for suggesting it to me. … The Club meets every Sunday and has some cabinet minister or government official down to speak to it. There are about thirty members, composed of undergraduates and dons. … Prof. R. Coupland is the leading light. He is a fellow at All Soul's and lectures in Canadian and imperial history. John Farthing is secretary, and there are three other Canadians, all from Toronto. … The meetings are strictly private, and the men who speak do so, not to gain favor or make a case, but simply to provide accurate information to those who, it is assumed, will be following them in years to come.*

*

At the end of August 1923, Graham's mother, sister and brother arrived in Oxford, where they lived for the next two years. Though Graham had encouraged his mother to come, there is no explanation for her decision; it was apparently with her husband's full approval. When interviewed in 1988, Daniel stated that his mother had fallen in love with England when she was living there during the war and that she did not like Calgary, which was still a frontier town. The fact that Graham, her pride and joy, was in Oxford provided her with the opportunity she was seeking to return to England.

Graham was not in England to meet his family. He spent the summer months in Uriage-les-Bains, just outside Grenoble, in the French Alps. He explained to his mother that he could not afford to stay in England over the summer, could not afford to travel back and forth to Grenoble to meet them, and could not afford to return from Grenoble at the time of their arrival and spend the last six weeks of the summer holidays in England. He complained frequently about the scholarship being inadequate and, although he wrote some articles for the *Free Press* and received payment – always with a kind note from Dafoe – he left Oxford in 1925 owing £50 to the university, and with the loan he had secured to travel to Oxford in 1922 still unpaid. Graham's parents, apparently, did not have much money either. In the letters in which Mrs. Spry's move to England was discussed, money was always noted as the reason for the length of time taken to reach a decision.

Graham chose France for the summer vacation because he wanted to learn more French – "to speak it, to think it: this, not for the examinations, but for the approaching problem of races." Grenoble was chosen because it was near the mountains and had a university. Graham's day consisted of reading history (the Romans, Saxons and Normans) all morning and early afternoon, French conversation in the middle afternoon, and tennis in the late afternoon. In the evening he read more history.

In a letter to Dorothy Bell, Graham described his leisure time:

> *Sunday is always free, and occasionally, if my work is well in hand, I accept invitations to the many little dances at the hotels of the place. This is quite amusing. I like the French. They have all the friendliness of Canadians, none of the exaggerated intimacy of the Americans, and little of the terrifying self-possession which I admired, and fear so much in the English. The French are extraordinarily human. One becomes friends in the same instantaneous way as in Canada. The boys are good sports, hold their tempers much better than we do, and are not as cultured, but every bit as gentlemanly as the English of a similar class. The girls are very like Canadian girls. They have much the same minds, though just as shrewd as the Americans, and as quick to see an advantage, they … possess a considerateness and friendliness which I have come to recognize, in comparisons, as a very distinct predominant characteristic of Canadian girls. …*

In the same letter he also outlined his first year at Oxford:

> *The first year at Oxford began in amazement, shyness, and delight. It passed through the stage of deflation, self-effacement, and terrible realization of colossal ignorance, and hopeless inferiority. It ended in all of these, but found friends, interests, and some definite conception of present duties and future responsibilities. For discovering yourself, in all its terrifying reality, Oxford provides the most adequate means. Its method of discovery is painful, but like fire it burns away a great deal of objectionable dross. It reduces one to insignificance, modesty, and*

> *contentment. It is the most educating place in the English-speaking world. I love its spirit, its fairness and impartiality, its cultured consideration for both sides in every difference, more than anything else that has ever reached my mind (a difficult thing to find).*

The arrival of Mrs. Spry in Oxford seems to have caused a drastic reduction in Graham's letter writing. There are, significantly, no letters to his father, and many fewer to friends in Canada. From the few that do exist it appears that Graham remained in residence at University College, although he had considered living with his family for one of the two remaining years. His activities were much the same as in his first year: "Debating, publicity for the League of Nations assembly, the Liberal club, the Ralegh club, a Canadian group, stroking a college four … and reading many hours a day."

The four Sprys went to Paris for Christmas 1924. Arnold Heeney, King Gordon and his sister, Mary, joined them after a stay in Switzerland. Although this was supposed to be a vacation, Graham was reading an average of sixty hours a week: "So we do work, and must at Oxford. But not so much during the term."

King Gordon introduced Graham to Florence and the Pensione Rigatti, during the Easter 1924 vacation. Gilbert Ryle travelled with them and, in Florence, they met with two more Canadians: John Low of Calgary and John Dunlop of Truro, Nova Scotia. Graham fell in love with Florence. He called it his spiritual home and returned to it perhaps twenty times in later years, meeting successive generations of the Benedictus family who inherited the Pensione Rigatti. He was there on 5 August 1944, the day the allied armies drove the Germans out of Florence and he was there in the spring of 1983, just six months before he died. In a short, handwritten note to his mother, who was in Oxford, he provided his first impression:

> *Florence is like the atmosphere of* [?] *that pervades a room when a vase of old lavender is brought in. The past still lives, here, and what the noisy, dull, modern age has introduced, travels in the form of the past among a people who are centuries both ahead and behind us.*

On 27 April 1924, after his return to Oxford, Graham wrote to a friend:

> *The sunny reaches of Italy are far behind me, five pounds behind me (third class) and the impressive Palazzo Vecchio, the glories of Giotto's tower, the awe and universal spirit of the sacristy of San Lorenzo are memories, vivid memories. …*
>
> *Of all places, this is the most beautiful. I would not say other vacs have been wasted, but I would say that the maximum value has not been obtained in them. But in Italy, in Florence, one feels that here, not today but in the past, the human mind reached its highest pitch. Perhaps, Athens in the days of its glories equalled Florence. But Florence lives where Greece is ruins. The homes, the workshops, the churches, the palaces of the great of the Renascence, Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Machiavelli,*

> *Lorenzo Magnifico, Boccaccio, Amerigo Vespucci, these places are still to be seen and the work each did can still be appreciated. Some of these men got their heads above the clouds and saw. In Florence, you can see the same clouds and guess what light there must be beyond them. The place I would prefer to work in is Winnipeg, to read in is Oxford, but to think or to die, Florence.*

This letter also stated that Graham was rowing in his old place again, two in the first eight, and that they had made two bumps and were now third on the river. It is the last letter in his papers until July 1925.

Graham took his exams at the end of his second year and received second-class honours, which he said was "about what I deserved." The Rhodes Scholarship was awarded for three years but many students, who already had degrees before going to Oxford, were able to write their exams after two years. George Ferguson was in this position the year before Graham and had decided to stay on at Oxford for his third year to read. Graham did the same. He had a tutor, Reginald Coupland, and he concentrated on books that dealt with self-government of the various dominions. It was a useful year but a rather leisurely one because he did not have to worry about exams.

*

In the spring of 1925 Graham applied to the *Manchester Guardian*, the Paris edition of the *New York Herald Tribune*, and the League of Nations in Geneva for work. So sure was he that he would hear soon about one of these job opportunities that he drained his bank account and, after seeing his mother, sister and brother off to Canada at Liverpool, took a short holiday in Scotland. He heard nothing and in July found himself in London unemployed and almost broke. An Oxford friend, Philip Bell, provided him with lodging. On 31 July he described himself to a friend as a free-lance journalist, "too free, I fear, for I have so far cost no paper anything, and my lance, like Quixote's has tilted at mocking windmills."

One Saturday morning he found himself without a cent to his name. Pride prevented him from borrowing from his host or from cabling his father in Calgary. By Sunday evening, not having eaten for two days, he decided to go for a walk and when he was putting on his coat in the hall he noticed two empty beer bottles on the floor. They had stickers on them that said "2d. on return." He took them and walked along the street until he came to a pub where he asked for a refund for the bottles. It was explained to him that pubs only accepted bottles from their own brewery, and the bottles he had were from elsewhere. He walked on until he found a pub that would accept his bottles; with the 4d. he bought some cheese and crackers and felt better.

The next morning he was offered a job at the *Daily Express* in the editorial department, whose policy he described as "uninformed, unintelligent, and to most minds, dangerous," at £8 a week for four weeks. He accepted with alacrity. On 10 August at 2:00 A.M. – the end of his shift – Graham wrote to George Ferguson, who was now back in Canada and working at the *Free Press* in Winnipeg:

> *The last edition is roaring off the press, the carters are shouting and cursing, the news room looks like bedlam, all the subs but one have gone, there is a nice ripe smell of printers' ink: and I am happy. …*
>
> *There is no use in posing as a scholar or assuming a donnish air. The squalor of Shoe Lane and the hurly-burly of Fleet Street, the fine thrill of getting a difficult story, the childish satisfaction of seeing one's own bilge there in black and white of a morning, these things, or any of them, lay me low, cut the Oxford superstructure from me, dissipate the academic calm, strip me of that thin and superficial culture, reveal nakedly as I am, as I was, as I will be, a journalist; or worse (Allah be praised!) a newspaperman.*

He told George that he was still hoping to hear from the League of Nations and explained why he wanted to work in Geneva:

> *The work offers an opportunity for realizing three of my wishes, to learn French thoroughly, to learn something of international politics, to gain some sound newspaper experience. … Moreover, the league will take the edge off studentship; a period there and I will come home as more than a schoolboy. And there are many Canadians to be met at or through Geneva. So, frankly, I see Geneva at once as training which I wish, and as a step towards some sort of political occupation in Canada.*

He also admitted that he would not be too disappointed if the job did not materialize because he was ready to go home. However, he was offered a three-month position, later extended, in the editorial department of the Research Division of the International Labour Organization (ILO). There were three other Canadians in the department: Norman (Larry) Mackenzie from Pictou County, Nova Scotia (later a senator); D.A. Stevenson, a graduate of University of Toronto; and Dr. Mack Eastman, a former professor at the University of British Columbia. Graham was given "an office with a spacious desk, a leather chair and an unequalled view of Mont Blanc."

His duties consisted mainly of editing the English edition of the *International Labour Review*: "It is the dullest review in the world: labour problems, statistics, the price of boots in Bohemia, beer in Bulgaria, wine in Winnipeg, wheat pools, slavery … every subject that can possibly affect the economic present, past or future of mankind from China to Peru." He corrected proof from Czechoslovakia and translated French articles into English. The staff at the ILO was composed of thirty-four nationalities and, according to Graham, fell into two categories – the quick and the dead. The dead he further described as "true civil servants." In a letter dated 11 November 1925, barely six weeks after his arrival in Geneva, Graham described his life after working hours:

> *Last weekend, I went to a dance here, and danced with at least seven nationalities. My French, aided by music and champagne enormously improved. Alas, it was 7:15 when I arrived home, and the good Madame here, a stern Calvinist views me with a touch of regret. ... Literally, every nationality under the sun seemed to be there. I had two dances with a Japanese girl in Japanese costume. Hungarians, Belgians, French, Rumanian, Canadian, American, Swiss, German, etc etc. I danced with them all.*
>
> *The week before that I had dinner at a Canadian's here – Sir Herbert Ames, who is director of finances for the league. There was an equally cosmopolitan atmosphere. A Russian princess, looking like a villainess from* War and Peace, *a Finn, a Dane, etc. etc. The secretary of the League council was also there and fresh from the meeting on the Greek-Bulgarian crisis. Had it not been for the kind attentions of an American, who was anxious to teach me the geography, flora, fauna, geology, theology and glory of Boston, I would have had enough inner history to write a book on "The Truth of the Balkan Crisis. By one who knows." ... Four ears, and no tongue would be an interesting and safe way of living in Geneva.*

Graham climbed mountains, was once "chased down the mountainside by a black blizzard," and tried downhill skiing. He spent Christmas at the Pensione Rigatti in Florence but returned a little earlier than planned to visit with Arnold Heeney, who was in his last year at Oxford and had gone to Geneva over the holidays. Every letter he wrote during this period finished by expressing a desire to go home. On 16 January 1926, he told George Ferguson that he could not stay in Europe: "I may stay here a year, two years, but someday, whatever the cost, I am coming home, home because it is home, and because nothing here or in England could make me feel at home." This is the last letter written to a friend (although there are a few others to his mother) until 8 June 1926, and it is written on the *Calgary Albertan* letterhead.

Upon his return to Canada, Graham stopped in Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg and Regina to visit friends and discuss job opportunities on his way to Calgary. He also gave several speeches, about the League of Nations to Rotary Clubs, Canadian Clubs, women's and church groups. Over the summer he covered the federal election (R.B. Bennett was running in Calgary South) for the *Calgary Albertan* and considered a few job opportunities, eventually agreeing to be the first full-time national secretary of the Association of Canadian Clubs (ACC).

In 1977, in notes for his memoirs, Graham explained his decision to accept the position with the association:

> *When I returned to Canada in the summer of 1926, after nearly a year in* [Geneva], *I was looking about for both experience and a path into active Canadian life. Past experience had planted two seeds – fascinated*

and excited interest in Canada, and an ambition to be involved in Canadian affairs.

I could have rejoined the Free Press *and J.W. Dafoe and my Alberta and Oxford friend George Ferguson, later to succeed J.W. Dafoe as editor-in-chief, but I wanted both to see more of Canada and to become immersed in some social or even political movement.*

E.J. Tarr, K.C., asked me to meet him and a number of friends such as Rod Finlayson, a university friend, now in 1926 practicing law, and asked me to consider becoming national secretary of the Association of Canadian Clubs; to study and promote Canadian unity and especially to find ways of easing the war-time bitterness between French and English Canadians.

The Canadian Clubs job was something which would enable me to see all of Canada and all walks of life through travel, meetings and conferences. I was not taking sides as between one party interest and another and it was a job in which I would have the executive responsibility to make or mar as abilities or lack allowed. I would be on my own and on my own in the centre of Canadian government in Ottawa. The whole of Canada, in effect, was laid before me. I could not have been happier.

1926-1930

The Association of Canadian Clubs; Ottawa; the Smart family; the French-English dilemma.

> *This was the era of Liberal dominance, under Mr. Mackenzie King, and of R.B. Bennett, of the sorry aftermath in relations between French and English Canadians, of the conscription crisis during the war; of … the conversion of the British Empire into the British Commonwealth of Nations, of increasing association with the United States in commerce, investment and new media such as films and radio broadcasting.* (Spry Memoirs. NAC, Vol. 84-12)

The Association of Canadian Clubs (ACC), founded in Hamilton in 1893, had declined after the war. There were still a few active clubs in some centres, but in many cases the clubs existed in name only or had disbanded. This was partly because community leaders interested in national issues had become involved in new organizations such as the League of Nations societies, but mainly because there was no central leadership and no cohesion. One part-time secretary arranged speakers' tours, organized new clubs and issued bulletins on club activities, but such efforts failed to gain momentum until an office was opened in Ottawa and Graham was given the mandate to revitalize the association, and make special efforts to improve the relationship between French and English Canada.

In April 1928, after eighteen months' service, Graham was able to boast that:

> *the Canadian Club movement has grown from 53 clubs to 115… Itineraries* [speakers' tours] *covering the whole Dominion have been organized. Since last September just under 100 meetings for western speakers alone have been arranged east of Winnipeg. A quarterly magazine is now being published and the movement has become a great educational influence, not only in a few centres but throughout the Dominion.*

The quarterly magazine, edited by Graham, was called the *Canadian Nation*. The same edition that reported on the ACC's growth also outlined its objectives, the first of which was to "foster and encourage a national public opinion and spirit, to stimulate intelligent citizenship, to awaken an interest in public affairs and to cultivate an attachment to the institutions and soil of Canada." Other issues spoke of fostering friendly and equitable relationships between the two great races of the dominion; of assisting new Canadians in becoming part of the national life; of encouraging the study of the arts, literature and history of Canada; and of making Canada a strong, united nation.

Graham travelled from coast to coast in Canada at least once a year, visiting hundreds of cities and towns, and every provincial capital except Fredericton; he intended to go to Fredericton at least once but was directed to the wrong train and ended up in Halifax instead. On these visits he made a point of meeting provincial, community and business leaders, presidents of universities, editors of newspapers, and heads of the various established churches, especially the Catholic church in Quebec. These travels were, for Graham, "a splendid introduction to Canadian life at a moment when Canada was moving into total self-government, the period of Mackenzie King and, above all, a surge of pride and desire to make Canada a strong, sensible, decent country."

On these trips Graham would solicit support for the ACC, identify community leaders who might sit on the executive at the national or local level, and learn of people interested in travelling across Canada to speak to ACC members. Speakers from western Canada would be chosen to tour the maritime provinces, while speakers from French Canada would travel through the West. The purpose of these speaking tours was to develop an understanding and appreciation of the diverse lives that Canadians lived and the concerns that affected Canadians in the various regions of the country.

In one edition of the *Canadian Nation* Graham announced that author Frederick Philip Grove would tour Canadian Clubs for two months, speaking on "Canada — The Spiritual Awakening of an Individual." Another tour was organized for Mme. Jeanne Dusseau to introduce French-Canadian and Indian folk songs to a wider public. The cover of the program which was produced for this tour featured a winter village scene by Group of Seven painter A.Y. Jackson. The accompanying bibliography on folk songs listed one book by J. Murray Gibbon and two by Marius Barbeau; Gibbon and Barbeau, along with Dr. Ernest MacMillan and Graham, made up the Committee on Songs of Old Canada. The program also listed the officers of the Association of Canadian Clubs in 1927-28. Colonel C.R. McCullough of Hamilton was the honorary president, E.J. Tarr of Winnipeg was president, and C.G. Cowan, K.A. Greene and the Honourable Mr. Justice A.K. MacLean, among others, were on the executive in Ottawa. In the following two years J.M. Macdonnell, Marius Barbeau, the Right Honourable Sir Robert Borden and Dr. H.M. Tory were elected to the executive, while the president of the Canadian Club in Quebec City was a young lawyer by the name of Louis St. Laurent. In October 1929, the ACC's seventeenth annual general meeting took place in Quebec. The program was in French and English and the guest of honour was Quebec Premier L.A. Taschereau.

The Canadian League of Nations Society, which held its first meeting in Winnipeg in 1925, consisted of about fifteen groups when Graham joined the Ottawa chapter shortly after his arrival there. Its aims were similar to those of the ACC – "to foster a national as opposed to a sectional spirit; to stimulate popular interest in public affairs; to study topics of Canadian interest; and to exercise a constructive influence upon public opinion" – and it had many of the same officers, including Macdonnell, Cowan, Tarr and R.K. (Rod) Finlayson. W.D. (Bill) Herridge was a member in Ottawa, and Brooke Claxton, a member of the Montreal Canadian Club and therefore already known to Graham, was the secretary of the Canadian League. In 1929, when Claxton "felt compelled" to resign as secretary, Graham succeeded him. J.W. Dafoe, though not an officer of the league, was very much involved in the Winnipeg society and spoke at ACC meetings.

The Canadian Institute of International Affairs, similar in structure to the Canadian League of Nations Society but with a mandate to study international affairs, was organized in 1928, with Sir Robert Borden as president. It was through this group that Graham met Alan Plaunt in 1930.

In March 1927 Graham, in his capacity as national secretary of the ACC, was called before the House of Commons Select Standing Committee on Industrial and International Relations. Others called before the committee included Dr. O.D. Skelton, under-secretary of state for External Affairs; Professor Norman (Larry) MacKenzie, Graham's friend from Oxford and Geneva who was now teaching at the University of Toronto; Dean P.E. Corbett, of McGill University; and Dr. H.M. Tory, president of the League of Nations Society.

Graham began his presentation by suggesting that he could provide the committee with some information "in the matter of the study of international relations, and of the forming of public opinion on international questions in the Dominion of Canada." He criticized Canada for lacking "national unity," saying that Canadians were "too strongly influenced by the 'parish pump', and also have great difficulty in elevating our politics above local issues, local needs." He criticized English Canadians for failing to realize the great advantage which their French-Canadian fellow countrymen had in being bilingual, and concluded his opening remarks by stating that "the real weakness in Canada is in the lack of a strong, healthy and well-informed national public opinion."

Graham described the ACC as a nonpartisan organization "for the discussion of public questions," with 110 chapters, several of which were bilingual; one group, in Quebec City, was French-speaking. He noted that "the smallest Canadian Club is at Govenlock, Saskatchewan. It is a railway station, with a population of 8, and the Canadian Club has a membership of 125. It is mainly composed of ranchers and farmers of the district." He then went on to describe what the ACC had done to encourage the development of public opinion in the field of international relations:

> *for two years the Association of Canadian Clubs organized itineraries for Sir Herbert Ames, covering all Canadian Clubs from coast to coast. In each university he delivered a series of four lectures. He also spoke at high schools and normal schools, to the League of Nations Societies and to the study groups, ... and thus reached a tremendous swath of Canadian public opinion. ...* [Speaking tours were also organized for] *H.B. Butler, ILO; Philip Kerr, on the Naval situation and European politics; Mr. Lionel Curtis on China and Pacific problems; Mr. Basil Allen, on India; Professor J.T. Shatwell, on American foreign policy. ... The official publication, the* Canadian Nation, *has also had a similar policy... Some of the articles are entitled: "Canadian Legations Abroad," by Rt. Hon. W.L. Mackenzie King; "The Freedom of the Seas," by Norman MacKenzie; ... "Unity in Diversity," by Hon. E. Lapointe; "The Contribution of the French Regime," by Sir Robert Borden; "One Nation, Two Cultures," by the Editor* [Graham Spry].

Graham explained that he was also the editor of *Interdependence*, the monthly magazine of the League of Nations Society in Canada, which was "the only publication in Canada solely devoted to external affairs."

The article "One Nation, Two Cultures" mentioned above was the reprint of a bilingual address which Graham gave to the Canadian Club of Quebec in January 1929. It began:

> *The existence of two races, two languages, two cultures in the Dominion of Canada is a fact. The only question, therefore, is how a single, united nation may exist on the basis of that fact. There is one Canadian of French race and language for every two Canadians of English race and language. How shall both feel that common love for home and soil which is the soul of nationality? Both races have traditions, a past of their own. On what principle and to what ends may both races have a common national future?*
>
> *These vital questions cut clean through the whole of our national life. Race, indeed, today, as nearly a century ago, "drives a coach and four through most Canadian problems." Shall the people of Canada, with so vast an estate to develop in common, with so great a part to play in elevating the quality of living, and so noble an opportunity awaiting them alike in the British Empire and in the sphere of international relations, always be faced with the menace of racial discord, of attacks by one race on the integrity of the other, of recourse to embittered discussion of rights that should be secure or wrongs that should have been corrected, when scores of social and economic problems are crying out for solution? Race is like a car left with its engine running. The slightest touch will put it in gear and set it speeding towards some bitter accident.*

The substance of the speech was an affirmation of the policy of the Fathers of Confederation: "the recognition of the identity of both races, both languages, both religions, both cultures." In one of the concluding paragraphs Graham warned:

> *One nation, two cultures; one nationality, two races; one loyalty, two tongues, on this the Dominion of Canada is founded, on this the partnership rests by solemn contract, by mutual trust. And thus it must abide or perish. Let it abide, and the nation will grow greater, and the world richer... Let it fail, let race seek to dominate race, let prejudice take its rein and ride rough shod through the fine bonds that unite us, and Confederation shall perish, and the peoples of Canada be thrust towards a future, dark and impenetrable.*

*

In December 1926 Graham went to Calgary to attend the wedding of his sister, who married Roy East, a Royal Bank manager from that city. There are two postcards on file announcing that he would be speaking at the Royal Alexandria Hotel in Winnipeg on 24 February 1927, and at the King Edward Hotel in Toronto on 21 March 1927. Little else is known about Graham's movements at this time until the summer of 1927, when he rented a house on Range Road for himself, his mother and his brother Daniel. His father, who was transferred from Calgary to Halifax, stopped for the family on his way through Ottawa in the fall. In November Graham rented an apartment at 173 Daly Avenue.

Two letters from Graham to his mother, written in November 1927, are to be found in his papers. The following is an excerpt from one of them:

> *You will be interested, of course, that I should be invited to Government House. It was a pleasant experience but not by any means startlingly so. The interesting point, in essence, is this, that Rideau Hall is the only court in the Americas. Lady Willingdon is a busybody who will wear out her welcome in Ottawa and will only fail to do so in Canada because Canada is too large and her time here too short. Lord Willingdon is almost to be considered as a tool for the energies of Lady Willingdon. He has no particular grasp of the Canadian problem, but he is genial, dignified, and will not make trouble. No more is really required of a Governor-General.*

There are no further letters until March 1929.

In May 1929 Graham told his mother that he was making a quick trip to Winnipeg to see Dorothy Bell before he left for Europe on a trip organized by the ACC. He stated that he would be travelling to Winnipeg with Laurie Phinney, who "appeared at the door early one morning without warning, and we fell into each other's arms. Reserved as we usually are, when we meet again, we behave like long separated lovers." He also told his mother that he was going to make a will:

> *I find that I have property in Rockcliffe worth some $2,000 to $2,500, a $1,000 worth of Power Corp. debentures on which $300 has been paid, war insurance $5,000, accident $5,000, Sun Life $3,000, books and carpets and furniture $500 to $700. This I am making over in toto to you for your use during your life, thence to Daniel for his education.*

There is no other mention of Dorothy Bell in the the letters, apart from a line or two saying that they went dancing together in Toronto (where she was visiting an aunt). However, in Graham's memoirs, he says that he became engaged to Dorothy in 1929; the engagement was broken. Although his memoirs tell the story differently, the sardonic tone of the following letter, written to his mother from Windermere in northern England on 18 June 1929, suggests that the engagement was cancelled before he left for Europe, presumably when he was in Winnipeg:

> *My gallant body of male and female dowagers has arrived, as you see in Windermere. Bathos and beauty, peace and war, there are the contrasts. I look from my window, the wandering little lake strays idly through the valley. The hills lie genially, calmly round. Mists grey and clouds white caress the crests. Peace, peace, what peace. And below Mrs. Greening talking about her bad heart and her son who tried to cross the Atlantic in an Evinrude; Mrs. A. Smith gushing like a ducal porpoise; Mr. MacGregor playing up to the ladies and sub-consciously preparing for any convenient row, and Col. McCullough chatting like a Rotarian from Buffalo and assuming the airs of a Major General from Bath. No wonder I prefer the window and the hills and the mists. At every possible moment, regardless of the responsibility of playing the lubricant and politician of group goodwill, I hie to the nearest loneliness and commune with company which however troublesome at least keeps quiet, lets the senses soothe themselves in thought or easy observation of the unpeopled world round him, him, my bestirred, be-troubled happy contented self.*
>
> *What a trip, and in such a mood. I can only account for my unusual jerkiness of address and feeling by looking to the cause of my flight. But the countryside is so alluring that nothing else matters once I can escape and be alone. Belfast, Dublin, Liverpool, and now Windermere, each with some special appeal and interest. Belfast for its countryside was beautiful and pleasant, but it is a weird place and I do not like the city. Neither Scotch nor English yet not Irish. Something between with a strong dash of the worst snobbery and worst society imperialism of Toronto. Dublin, however, I gloried in. There I found touches reminiscent of Bruges, of Paris, of London, and of the eighteenth century. On my first morning there, I rose at six and walked through the slowly waking city for two and a half hours. It was cool. There was a slight morning mist and the sun cast fitful shadows and touched with gold the*

> *old classical eighteenth century buildings. I could write for days of that walk. I had not slept for several nights. I was nervously acute to sights and sounds. The senses were keen, and every building, the quais along the Liffey, odd people down odd old streets and buildings blinking their eyes in the morning sun were full of meaning. A great walk, rich in emotional experiences; a precious, precious morning. In the afternoon, I deserted the party and wandered again, visiting old bookstores, talking to funny old wretches, and poking down strange, listless, anaemic alleys, met charming, voluble murderers and learned from* [them] *of the revolution and secret societies, and the art of being happy though blood thirsty and hunted. A thrilling city, Irish, eighteenth century, Catholic, wicked, smelling of blood, and feeling like the air of a powder magazine. There may be trouble yet, though I have faith in the healing virtues of self-government. As my most informing murderer stated it. "This is not peace. Ireland is not settled, she is only exhausted. The troubles, shure, will come agin." … These hours by myself make the tour worth while, but I am kept busy with petty things, now ordered about like a servant, now expected to be a general… The party is most unrepresentative of the Canadian Clubs… This tour should never have been. … And now to bed. I am quite tired, and will sleep like a top. There is nothing to do for twelve hours. I will read a second edition of Goldsmith's essays I bought in Dublin where it was printed in 1767.*

In Graham's papers there are a few other letters to his mother in the summer and fall of 1929, one in January and one in February 1930, and then none until January 1932. The January 1930 letter was written after a trip across Canada. Graham skied in British Columbia, spent Christmas with his aunt Ethel and uncle Jim in Winnipeg, and complained of "the boredom of hotel life, the annoyances of constant train journeys, and the nervous exhaustion that follows days of talking and being polite." It was at about this time that Graham was being considered for a position in Prime Minister Mackenzie King's office. On 21 February 1930, the day after his thirtieth birthday, he wrote to his mother:

> *The entry upon the year thirty passed with regret and idle protest, lightened only by your kind thoughtfulness and letter, and by father's greetings. I unnecessarily and violently detest the passing of every year. Time always seems to press. With some people, the problem is what to do. My problem is to find time to do the thousand things I would like to do, and to follow the developing interests of every day. … Since returning, here, moreover, there has been much to do… We have had two three to four hour committee meetings, requiring much preparation. The last committee meeting was a special one called to listen to my suggestions for developing the Association. It was an admirable meeting… If the committee continues its interest and really tries to develop my ideas, then, I shall certainly remain with the Canadian Club. It has many advantages, an easy summer, little or no bickering, and agreeable people to work with. The P.M. job, on which there have been no developments,*

> *would be a racking and exhausting position, full of interest, very alluring but I would not have the same opportunity for personal initiative.*
>
> *In the Canadian Club, I am on the fringe of almost everything but business activities in the Dominion. In the last two weeks, for example, I have been brought into touch with the Canadian art movement, with the use of the radio for Canadian purposes, with some hopes of the monarchs at Government House, with the political situation in Saskatchewan, with the St. Lawrence waterways question, with Canadian music, and with other questions. There is, in a fortnight, no large question touching any side of Canadian life that does not concern me in some way, a very small way, a very indirect way, but usually in an interesting way. And that is a great deal, in this world. … And, then, there is the social side. I belong to the French and the English, Catholic and Protestant, Conservative, Liberal and Farmer, and have excellent friends among all of them. Last Sunday, I skied for one hour (freezing both ears, a cheek and both toes), returned to a reception by Gustave Lanctot of the Archives for Dr. Montpetit of the University of Montreal. I was the only Anglais present. … At noon, I had lunch with the Cowans, then attended a practice of the Minto Follies, then went to Ottawa University too late, for the meeting of a Société Littéraire, then to tea at Col. O.M. Biggars… Monday there was skating or a group meeting at Sir William Clarke's on India, Tuesday night a farewell dinner for Capt. Fiennes, a retiring ADC, with Lady Willingdon as my partner… luncheons, Tuesday with Bertram Brooker, editor of the* Canadian Year Book of the Arts *(to which I was asked to contribute), Wednesday with Norman Robertson, today with Judge Duff, Hugh Macdonnell and Dick Ritchie, the local Crown prosecutor. And I have had … chats innumerable on all that is interesting in the present day. My only complaint is that I look on too much, do not write enough, and am more an entrepreneur than a creator.*

*

Graham's letters and official papers provide nothing further for the years 1926 to 1930. However, his draft memoirs add to our knowledge of this period. The following story about Marius Barbeau (dominion ethnologist at what is now the Museum of Civilization), is an example. It was written in 1976:

> *I saw quite a lot of Barbeau about this time and was then organizing with him a tour by Mme Jeanne Dusseau, a soprano, across Canada singing French Canadian folk songs, as well as one or two Indian folk songs, which Barbeau had recorded. … In his work on totem poles and Indian songs in the Nass, Skeena and other rivers on the north-west coast of British Columbia, both on the mainland and Vancouver Island, he had brought to Canadian attention, a resisting attention, and made the art of the Pacific coast, the primeval art of the Pacific coast, part of this new over-used word, the Canadian heritage. It had always been that*

but the rather dull Anglo Saxons which we all are had failed to appreciate this. Barbeau collected carvings, soapstone carvings in particular, wooden carvings, masks, he bought boats and other structures which the Indians of various tribes had produced there. These are to be seen in the museum now. … One year (1928 or 1930) I spent one month in the mid-summer with Marius Barbeau in the St. Lawrence Valley, particularly in the neighbourhood of Quebec and Baie St. Paul or the Island of Orleans. … On the Island of Orleans first of all, I mentioned to Marius that I had a grandmother whose name was Fortier and the tradition was that the family had been given land at St. Jean on the Island of Orleans. … [When] *we were going along the south shore by bicycle, he said, "Now we will stop at your ancestral home." We did in the sense that we called on the Curé and asked if there were any Fortier families living nearby. He said, "Simply go down the road, you will find a little bay on the right and it's the farm on the other side of that little bay." It's scarcely a bay, it's just an indentation in the side of the Island of Orleans. He said, "You go there and you'll find that there's a farmer and his family living there and their name is Fortier," and they had had this land since sometime in the sixteen hundreds. They were remote relatives. … On the Island of Orleans, we stayed at a number of places, usually sleeping in a spare room at one of the farmhouses, which was a very pleasant experience, and at that time the older people in the houses were people who baked their own bread and on two occasions at least, made their own beer, they were almost self-supporting, although that was decreasing under the influence of processed foods and motor cars, and whatnot. In one of the houses we stayed at in St. Laurent on the North Shore, all the carpets, pillow cases, the sheets, the blankets, the linen in the kitchen, the towels, the curtains all had been made in the house, but the cloth in quite a number of instances had actually been woven on this farm itself, from the wool of sheep that they had raised. … Barbeau was picking up things as he went along … anything that was old and beautiful, he would buy it. Sometimes he allowed his enthusiasm to go ahead of him. Some modern imitation, which he would at once recognize, but which he would buy just because it was an imitation of something of a style that he had no sample of in the museum. There was one chair in the house that we stayed in in St. Laurent. It was a rocking chair with remarkably long rockers. The rockers must have been 8 or 10 feet… It was positively terrifying if you rocked fully. The old lady would sit and rock away, not very wildly, out in the big room which was also the dining room and indeed* [the] *kitchen was almost part of it. Barbeau liked the chair and he also liked the highly coloured rug underneath it, which was homemade, of course, and* [in] *the centre of this rug … was a yellow duck, an almost childish yellow duck… Barbeau wanted both, so he argued and argued and argued and eventually he had to raise the price.*

*

The Smart family, which was to play a prominent role in Graham's life, is also described in his memoirs:

> [It was] *September 1926 or June 1927. John Stevenson, then Ottawa Correspondent with the* Times, *London, picked me up from the steps of the Chateau Laurier and introduced me to the Smart family and to their cottage, "The Barge." To Russel, barrister, chemist and engineer, practicing in patent law and to his wife Louie, devoted reader, ardent conversationalist, warm hostess and student of oriental religions and lore. And to the three daughters – Helen, Elizabeth, Jane, daughters not of their own time but of enfranchising and bolder decades to come, and "Young Russel," the son of his father and his father's profession and an able collector of moths, butterflies and ski slopes.*
>
> *The name, The Barge, came from the hull like shape of the northern front of the cottage and its wide prow of timber and glass thrusting through the crowded trees on the sloping cliff-like shores towards the waters of the lake.*
>
> *These Smarts were more than the usual Canadian family of the period: they were harbingers of the coming dangerous age of both Europe and North America, of the hastening age that changed art and literature, loving and living with a surge before and after the war. …* [The Smarts provided] *a hospitable home where lively, well-informed friends were generously welcomed, admirably nourished, and forgiven any quirk of conduct or opinion so long as pretensions were gently asserted and argument stimulated with skill and finesse.*
>
> *The three daughters of the Smart family were ten years plus or minus younger than I was when I arrived in Ottawa and … as each having reached the dancing age, it was I who was chosen by Louie to take them in succession to their first dances. … In a quiet but devoted spirit, I delighted in each of them and might have wished to marry one of them but in fact nearly married another of several dear friends. Their wish, or wisdom, forestalled, not without some pain and drama, such a result and they went their bolder, more dangerous, or happy ways and in my own different and also momentarily dangerous political days as a street corner orator and party organizer when a million and a half Canadians were without regular income, I was bravely accepted by a lady, not from Ottawa or Kingsmere but by Irene Biss, of the University of Toronto and our common political arena in the depths of the depression.*
>
> *Helen, the eldest girl, was in 1927 about 17 or 18 and after Elmwood, the private school in Rockcliffe, was en route to McGill in Montreal. She was a lively and attractive young lady, skied and swam well, danced admirably and was gaily sociable. Louie and Russel, in no degree disguised their hope that so well-behaved a young man of 27 as I appeared to be might, as Helen grew older, propose to her. I was frequently her dancing partner at house parties of the young and*

marriagable or at the Royal Golf & Country Club or we went, as was more frequent, together to the supper dance in the Chateau Laurier. When Helen went to McGill, I frequently arranged twosomes in Montreal. We were, we thought, splendid, splendidly rhythmical partners. But it was a dancing, not a love, affair. ... Jane was the youngest girl. ... She was very happy company. She was also full of varied but incompletely realized talent. She wrote acceptable poetry and carried on correspondence with a leading English poet, whom the Smarts had entertained while he was visiting Ottawa. Her sketching was able and she could dash off in a roving but single unbroken line, a very satisfactory pencil drawing of any friendly face which won her attention. She played the violin – filling the attic of the Daly Street house with her exercises... Betty was different from both her sisters, Helen and Jane, and the most original and talented of the three. She was also at once the best read and most intellectual and most conversational, challenging and in her own style, the most witty. ... As a girl, she usually had a book in her hand. Her ability to recall and quote from memory accurately word for word was astonishing: she seemed to know every line of every sonnet of Shakespeare and no less the writing of the war generation and thereafter.

It was her pleasure to make, cut and create, little books of perhaps one and a half by two inches and fill some 40 or 50 pages with poems or quotations in petite, fine handwriting of her own. Such a tiny volume would be addressed to the fortunate receiver with a smile, a drop of her blonde head, and a graceful gesture of her hand. The gift and the giving were significant and no casual event for Betty or the receiver. Few, I am sure, were so honoured: I boast of two made for me and a third with no inscription. ... Physically, Betty was well-proportioned, sturdy, and of medium stature. Her hair was very blonde but not quite golden. Her eyes were blue, a luminescent blue. She was a good swimmer, a trained but not skillful diver, and a superb dancer. During the first summer of my visits to the Smarts' cottage, The Barge, Betty was recovering from rheumatic fever and was in an invalid's chair... She swam little and was allowed to dance only gently. But during the winter in Ottawa, I was asked to take Betty to private dances in the homes of her friends or be a somewhat elderly partner (all of 28) at the Smarts' house on Daly Avenue. ... The next years continued with these pleasant rencontres and numbers of others. I was a bachelor, I soon had a car and an apartment and I was a frequently invited guest at parties, luncheons and dinners for all ages but most always, in a society short of young men, as at least a dancing partner and perhaps a prospective member of the family. Young bachelors and evening clothes were indeed in some demand at Government House and not infrequently the invitation from the ADC, Colonel Willis O'Connor, a great Ottawa River Valley Irishman, arrived almost as the dinner time was due, "It's me again," the Colonel would say over the telephone, "Find that white tie, a clean one this time, *and be here by 7:15," adding, the guests were British this or Quebec that and "one of them renegged on me. Jump to it."*

At these and the parties by families with sons or daughters of my late 20's and early 30's, I met political and business families from all over Canada. Not infrequently, there were people I had met in varied walks of life in the cities and towns I visited in my capacity as National Secretary of the Canadian Clubs. There were also the families of heads of ministries, commissions, and the apparatus of government. All this provided me with an extraordinary opportunity to feel the current of the political life and learn a little of the harsh but peaceful problems of Canadian existence. ... They also widened the choice of dancing partners. There were many, all happy and proper, but the most persistent visits were by invitation or by my own approaches to one or other of the three Smart girls. ... Russel and Louie were content and encouraging; the daughters with me, they felt, were in no danger. So far as the girls were concerned, they were free and it was not contrary to their tastes or status to be seen dancing with an older, a young man, not a boy.

I enjoyed the whole family and was almost one of its members, but I had other friendly families: J. Lorne McDougall and his children, and Odette Lapointe, daughter of the Hon. Ernest Lapointe, Minister of Justice. They were all close, close friends. Indeed, my dancing partners were, throughout my six years there, always three: Helen, Betty or Jane Smart, Bobby [Roberta] *McDougall, and Odette Lapointe.*

But beyond Ottawa, there were other friends, particularly in Winnipeg, and in 1929, I became engaged to Dorothy Bell there. The marriage was set a month or two later. But, as told elsewhere, though duly arranged for Toronto where Dorothy was to arrive, Jack Richardson appeared and with my whole-hearted if sad concurrence, my wedding was cancelled and shortly Dorothy and Jack were married. This made quite a story in some of the daily papers, but in most of them, friendly editors dropped it into the basket... It did no harm, either the press or the end to a happy affair. If there is to be an end to an engagement, it is wiser to have it before rather than after a marriage. I went to Europe instead with a Canadian Club tour.

This year was not only the year of my first engagement, but of the great crash and ensuing depression. It did not influence my income, but it shifted my interest, as reflected in permissible Canadian Club subjects, such as national independence, unity, one nation, two cultures, and relations with the United States to more specifically economic subjects, such as unemployment, wheat marketing, money supply and ... communications. ... because of the Aird Report on radio broadcasting of 1929 as well as an awareness of the BBC's establishment after 1925 in Britain, radio became a prime interest and cause; a precise, defined, intelligible cause in which I could be fully engaged. Into these interests I easily threw myself. The engagement between Dorothy and I was *agreeably and sensibly erased, all three of us were content and proceeded on our different ways quite happily. Nothing was here for tears, nothing to moan.*

The life in Ottawa was resumed as before. … Betty, now at least eighteen or nineteen years [she was actually fifteen in the summer of 1929] *… accepted my return and put me in my place by calling me, especially when younger gentlemen were in hearing, if you please, "Uncle Graham." That may be as it may be, but the old fellow of 30 or so was falling in love. Given the years between, there was, of course, nothing to be done. Betty's schooling went on. She spent one or two winters in England and we wrote more than a few letters. When she was in Ottawa, we danced, swam at Kingsmere, walked the paths of the Gatineau and King Mountains and argued about books. In this era, the Smarts moved from Daly Ave. to Acacia Road in Rockcliffe – one street away from where I am writing this – and I remained to all the young Smarts "Uncle Graham." … The year 1932 was a full one. My work and travels for the Association of Canadian Clubs demanded a very great deal. I was on the Executive of the League of Nations Society and editor of* Interdependence, *its journal, a creation of mine; … Chairman or President of the Canadian Radio League; and there were other interests – skiing, skating, swimming. There was the Empire Economic Conference in Ottawa in 1932.*

A wholly unofficial milieu of the younger men in the delegations, particularly the United Kingdom's Rt. Honorables and Lords and Sirs, was The Barge on Kingsmere Lake. Louie was a notable hostess and in the moist heat of an Ottawa summer, the refreshment of her home, her verandahs and her pine treed shore-line were very welcome. Russel also was a kind and very generous host. Luncheons, dinners, teas, cocktails, dances flowed along as the Empire meetings rolled on. … I had my uses at Kingsmere but there is nothing in my memory to support any hope I was of any significance. … Betty and her English guests sometimes needed a car, or Louie needed a chair moved and even at the dancing in the long room made from opening the sliding doors between the sitting and the dining areas the visiting delegates ruled the floor. Especially in the waltzing.

These affairs were relatively small: 10 or so for lunch, 20 or more for dinner, 100 for cocktails, 200 and upwards for dancing. There were official affairs at Government House, the Royal Ottawa Golf Club, the Country Club and elsewhere. The largest of them all was the United Kingdom Ball given at the Chateau Laurier by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, the Rt. Hon. Malcolm J. Macdonald.

The distinguished young and other visitors had their official responsibilities – Mr. and Mrs. Smart were not Canadian officials and were not invited. Nor were the daughters. There simply was not space at the Chateau for all who deserved to be invited. Ottawa had to let official *guests and visitors from other countries take almost exclusive precedence.*

Of the Ottawa young men who danced, dined or dived at Kingsmere chez the Smarts, I was, so far as I knew, the only one to receive an invitation for myself and partner. Suddenly, the defensive term "Uncle Graham" melted away. Uncle was going to the Ball!

I promptly invited Betty, but other problems remained. One was the English girl. I forget the name but there was also one other girl. Jane Smart was, despite her own convictions, too young and if Helen was about that evening of the Ball, I do not remember; I think not. But, I promised – with my one invitation for myself only – to take three girls to the Ball. It was a wicked thing to do. I did it by making three entrances, each time with a different girl. Betty was well known to Malcolm Macdonald, and so was I. Once she was in, I slipped out another door, met the second girl and when Malcolm was not in the receiving line, I entered a second time. The third time also worked but Malcolm was in the line and whatever the reason said nothing. ... In 1933, Russel Smart, who had become interested through Sir Stafford Cripps, his opposite in several cases before the Privy Council in London, in the British Labour Party and in the newly formed CCF, suggested that I go to Britain to meet Sir Stafford and Labour Party officers. The stated purpose was ... to form a link between the British Labour Party, the new Fabian Research Bureau, and the Socialist League, and the CCF.

There was another factor: Betty was in London studying the piano ... But which interest — the CCF or his daughter – led him to ask me to go to England and to provide [the] *means?*

I was in England several weeks and attended the Socialist League Conference. I met Sir Stafford ... Betty and I met in London and subject to her piano lessons and practicing, we spent a great deal of time together. ... Our first trip was to Oxford: we stayed at a very English hotel over the brow of Boar's Hill, visited and had meals or evenings with Gilbert Ryle... He motored us to a village on the downs where I had gone just before writing Oxford Finals. ... Betty and I, watched ironically by philosopher Gilbert ... chased one another over the soil where once Saxon and Dane had fought. It was a day of changing dark clouds and disappearing splashes of sunshine. The downs lay green above the quiet valleys and quiet houses. Our racing became a struggle – a pursuer and a prey. Betty raced, twisting and turning, her hair streaming in the breeze. I never caught her. It was a symbol, the right one for both of us. ... I returned to the battle of the Depression in Toronto uncommitted, uncertain, but not unaware that I was still "Uncle Graham."

*

Graham's diary also provides us with insights into his thoughts at this period. For example, a series of entries from April 1927 reveal his inner turmoil:

> *I am a battlefield. There are at war in me passions so strong that I dare not think of them frankly, that I dare not talk of them at all.*
>
> ***
>
> *As a body, I am full of passions. As a person, I am full of principles. As an individual formed of these two, I appear to believe in these principles, an aloofness suggests I practice them sincerely, and no incident of sex, or relations, has occurred to contradict appearances or confound sincerity. Yet appearances are false, the want of incident is false, the sincerity is a painted mask.*
>
> ***
>
> *I no longer consider sex dirty, nor fornication uncleanliness. I decline to believe the Puritan principle which regards with horror the act which brought a Milton into being. I decline to condemn the emotion through which the least of us came to be. No longer is intercourse horrible. On the contrary, sexual emotion and union has become almost beautiful … in proportion as I have become freed from the fear of it, from the Christian or Puritan labels attached to it, from the underground methods – cartoon, joke, cheap stories and allusions – which abuse it. What has made sex dirty to me before, now proves itself to be dirty itself. Scrub that off, and the thing itself, the genuine sex emotion and the act which realizes it, stands revealed as pure, clean, and, so far as it makes a man or a woman really fulfill love, really attain themselves in spiritual union one with the other, it is a communion, and, as such, perhaps, divine.*
>
> ***
>
> *The test is genuineness. Promiscuity, suggestiveness, prostitution are not genuinely sexual, but are sex made a business, a glittering paint, a mere physical act. … Sex may be as virtuous as chastity and as meritorious as nourishment.*
>
> ***
>
> *This war between sexual impulses and prohibitions within me, has taken me, at least, a little way. I can conceive of no more unhappy promise for a life with a woman whom I might have loved than the belief I had seven or eight years ago. … It was a belief based upon so-called Puritan principles, upon a knowledge of sex gathered haphazardly in the gutters of school and army, and it was re-inforced by the necessarily erroneous observations of a mind untutored in its mystery, or tutored in stained half-truths. … the whole of marriage would have been discoloured, & its beauty obscured, until some great contradiction like a child or, on the other extreme, a nervous disease, occurred to shatter that belief.*

> ***
>
> *The passion, itself, and no doubt the more knowing woman, save marriages from wrecking on the reef of ill-knowledge. Yet I truly praise God that my attitude has been changed. It has made the world less ugly and it has made Woman seem more beautiful. It has made much in life, in literature and my own experience richer and finer.*

Six weeks later, he was able to write in a less turbulent vein:

> *So at the age of twenty seven years and three months, I find myself a bachelor experienced in only the preliminary adolescent emotions of affection and in some of the charms and wiles of the feminine. Feminine friends I have in plenty – Muriel Smith, Dorothy Bell, Marjorie Glassco, Betty Wheeler, Frances Chaffey, but they are only friends.*
>
> *So, also, am I rather without a clean-cut method of living and without a centralized impulse of moral and intellectual development. Faith, yes, a political faith; hopes, yes; a personal ambition, yes; but not for position – yet I lack a sense of completeness and though political hopes and financial needs turn me aside, I would almost welcome a great defeat at the hands of a woman of some attractiveness, real character, and a sense of the comedy of living.*

By October 1927, Graham's thoughts were increasingly turning to questions of his future:

> *Yes, I am discontented. Not with the world, so much as with myself. I want to write; I do not write. I want to study; I do not study. I want to be an expert on some subject, to discipline my mind, to be able to think clearly; I do nothing to accomplish anything of these things. True, I do work, do find high pleasure in what I am attempting; but is it enough?*
>
> *By nature I am compelled to be a reformer. I can always imagine improvements, always scent evils, and very easily hate some wrongly based institution. … When will I be able to get out and fight like a reformer, there's the question? How will I live? Will it mean giving up good friends, the respect of people I respect, the opportunity to live decently and with money to buy books? To be able to help Daniel? To abandon the desire, more often felt, for a home, for some great spiritual experience of passion? These disturbing enemies awake occasionally, and worse than them is the apparent lack of real opportunities to make the fight I want to. In England there is the Labour Party. Here there is no party I could possibly give undivided allegiance to, to whose main tendencies, I could really give my devotion. The Farmers, they command the most, but the economic group basis is too narrow, though I enormously admire the democratic basis. The Wheat Pool, again a purely economic movement. The Liberals? They are no more liberal than the Czar of Russia.*

In November 1927 Graham had a touch of the flu which, he said, made him "damnably self-inquisitory":

> *I lay awake until 2 a.m; B. Russell's "Why I am not a Christian" put me to sleep. But for three hours, I cursed myself. I hate what Tolstoi calls "bien pensants" and I feel I am one of that nasty species. I am not doing my job, even as a secretary; I am not saving, I am not studying. I temporize, temporize. If I am true to my nature, such as it is, I should sternly, studiously, almost fiercely set to work absorbing more information, knowing the country better, thinking, writing, reading carefully. I am not. I dally. I accomplish nothing.*

A year later, on 19 December 1928, a diary entry further demonstrates Graham's emotional ambivalence:

> *This day finds my "education sentimentale" still halting and incomplete. My experiences have been few and but mildly stirring. There have been faint interests that snuffed themselves out, a few embraces, one kiss with a vital flicker of momentary and delicate passion, and a narrowing of deeper friendships to the number of two: but there has been no love. And I want love. That want is fully recognized, and that recognition is the measure of the progress, if any, in the … months since I last added a line to this bare, regrettable, record.*
>
> *Eighteen months ago, I wrote that "I would almost welcome a great defeat…" Today, there are no reservations: reservations of ambition, of fear that I may drop my anchor and be chained to a single harbour. The ambition, the fear persist. But the sense of incompleteness has greater urgency than fear or ambition. And I want the exaltation, the experience, the menace of passion. So, with a little laugh, I find myself now.*

At the end of this evidently tumultuous period we find a flurry of passages, entered between August and September 1929, a few months after Graham's engagement to Dorothy Bell was broken. They are all short, and were written a day or two apart:

> *Here, even in my apartment, I feel strangely lonely. I have many acquaintances here, but singularly few good friends, congenial friends. There are few lads that have my interests, and I, frankly, felt alone.*
>
> ***
>
> *After lunch yesterday, returned to the apartment, listened to a few French records and straightened out a few books. I brought back the books I left at Genève and had my Oxford books sent back…*
>
> ***
>
> *I always smile when I start writing plans. I spend my whole life making plans, and little else.*
>
> ***

Lunched at the Cowans'. … Played tennis with Mike Pearson, had tea at the McD's and dinner with the Pearsons.

***

There is a possibility, probably remote that I may change the job I am now at. … Rogers, the PM's [Prime Minister Mackenzie King] *political secretary, has resigned and is going to Queen's. He mentioned my name to the PM and Mike, on question from Mr. Massey, suggested my name to him.*

***

I hate the thought of utterly losing liberty, indeed, my highest ambition is a small assured income, time to study some particular question and ability to raise hell about it. And for recreation, dabbling with fiction and skating and tennis. An independent, disinterested student and agitator. That is my ambition. This country does not need anything more than it needs agitators who have no strings to restrain them and no ambitions to limit them. … But it takes a capital of say $50,000, and an income of $2,000 to $3,000.

***

Saw Dr. Skelton. He was delightful, and talked to me very frankly of Rogers's work. Said that he and Rogers agreed "that you were the predestined man…" The PM, however, has another man in view and that may considerably complicate matters. … The question, however, is, Do I want the job? The circumstances are so complicated, I like the Canadian Club so much, and love the freedom and sense of full responsibility that the job offers, and, now that there is a little [financial] *difficulty, I do not like to pull out. And no more easy weekends, and mildly idle summers, if the PM does appoint me.*

***

Willis O'Connor asked me to come out to Government House and meet Lord Pentland… Lunched at the Cowans' and took the bus out to Kingsmere. Played tennis with Helen as well as doubles. Two girls beat Mr. Smart and I. Played bridge that evening. Lost $2.90. … Hated paying over the money.

***

Monday, breakfasted at 11:30, played tennis in the boiling sunshine of noon, ate green apples, went out in a canoe, burned my nose off, swam, ate cake, grew raucous…

***

I told Rogers and Dr. Skelton that I did not see how things could be shaped to permit me leaving [the ACC] *even if the PM would want me to take the job. However, in March or so, when the situation re. the PM*

> *must come to a head, our Canadian Club circumstances may be improved.*
>
> ***
>
> *Had dinner with Malcolm Macdonald; John Stevenson and Ainslie Greene joined in.*
>
> ***
>
> *Saw Don McEachern and Arnold* [Heeney] *in Montreal a week ago, today. How I love my Wpg friends. If I revealed what I feel towards them, I would be embracing them en accolade, French fashion, and linking arms with them eternally.*

In the spring of 1930, before a decision was made about whether or not Graham would work for Mackenzie King, a federal election put R.B. Bennett and the Conservatives in power. There are no further entries in Graham's diary until September 1931, two years after the Great Crash and after one year of intense involvement with the Canadian Radio League:

> *I am trying to clean out my financial position, take my losses and hold what I have in cash. Debentures that cost a hundred are worth about 80, and stock worth 32 cannot be sold for 5. So much for my financial sagacity.*
>
> ***
>
> *This morning, as I arrived at the office, I saw Betty drive by. ... It was a joyful, sickening moment. The sheer spiritual exaltation, the succeeding sense of physical sinking, like falling in a dream; these are new, new feelings, akin only to the days of Aileen.*

Betty was preparing to leave for London. The evening before her departure Graham was invited to Kingsmere for tea. They agreed to meet the next morning at a crossroads on Betty's route to Montreal and the ship she would be travelling on:

> *Handshakes. Goodbyes. A hasty withdrawal as the car started; tears, my tears, if you please. Betty saw them coming, and waved till the car was lost in the traffic. For half an hour or more, I sat overlooking the Ottawa* [River], *from Parliament Hill and watched the clouds sweep gravely across Kingsmere mountain. I have not wept for two and a half years; I have only wept twice since 1921. And I hate Wertherian outbursts, and I feel absurd.*

1930-1932

The Canadian Radio League; a masterful lobby.

> *Here is a majestic instrument of national unity and national culture. Its potentialities are too great, its influence and significance are too vast, to be left to the petty purposes of selling cakes of soap.* (Spry, *Queen's Quarterly*, Winter 1931)

Graham's first task as national secretary of the ACC was to develop a proposal for a national celebration on the sixtieth anniversary of Confederation (1 July 1927). His suggestion, never before attempted, was to link all the small radio networks – mostly owned by the railway, telegraph and telephone companies – and the small private stations, to allow the prime minister and other officials to speak from Parliament Hill to all Canadians from coast to coast. Prime Minister King was delighted with the idea: he set up a Dominion Day Committee and named Jean Désy, a French Canadian in government service (later Canadian ambassador to Paris) and C.G. Cowan of the ACC as co-chairs.

The result was an enormous success. Parliament Hill was crowded with people, including Graham and his brother Daniel, who stood fairly close to the platform that had been erected for the speakers. It was obvious to Graham that Mackenzie King was deeply impressed with the power of radio broadcasting; nor was the point lost on the Conservatives.

The Canadian Clubs also experimented with radio, asking local radio stations to broadcast the speeches of luncheon guests. They were impressed, from a publicity and educational point of view, with the advantages of reaching a much larger audience than could fill a hotel lunch room.

By 1930, radio broadcasting had become a subject of public interest for several reasons. First, Canadian audiences were being swamped with broadcasts from the much more numerous and powerful stations in neighbouring American cities. Second, several religious groups owned and operated radio stations and the International Bible Students Association (an organization of Jehovah's Witnesses) were using their radio stations to attack the established churches, especially the Roman Catholic church. Third, the national radio hookup on 1 July 1927 had made many people realize the power of radio as a political and educational tool.

Finally, a royal commission – the Aird Commission – had been appointed by the federal government to "recommend on the future administration, management, control, and financing of broadcasting in Canada." Its members held hearings across the country, concluding that "Canadian radio listeners want Canadian broadcasting" and that the interests of Canadian listeners and of the Canadian nation "can be adequately served only by some form of public ownership, operation and control behind which is the national power and prestige of the whole public of the Dominion of Canada."

The Aird Report, tabled on 11 September 1929, immediately launched a vigorous debate – mostly in the newspapers – between those in favour of and those opposed to the recommendations. Discussions also took place at Canadian Club meetings, at the Canadian League of Nations Society meetings, and within a number of other organizations. The groups with which Graham was involved favoured public ownership and a national system controlled by the federal government, and wanted to see a broadcasting bill introduced in the House of Commons. However, Mackenzie King stalled for time and, before tabling a bill, called an election in the spring of 1930. The subsequent Conservative victory concerned supporters of the Aird Report, since they assumed that if the issue was public versus private ownership, the Conservatives would opt for the latter.

In the fall of 1930 Graham met Alan Plaunt; it was the beginning of a close friendship between the two men. Plaunt, who was four years younger than Graham, had attended the University of Toronto, then Christ Church College, Oxford, graduating with a degree in history in 1929. On his return to Canada he had become involved with the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. When Graham met him he had just returned from Japan, where he had accompanied Newton Wesley Rowell, the head of the Canadian delegation to the International Conference of the Institutes of International Affairs.

Graham suggested the idea of a radio league to Plaunt, who in turn suggested that they discuss the subject with members of the Program Committee of the Canadian Institute the following Sunday evening (5 October 1930). Of those present Tom Moore, president of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, and Margaret Southam, of the newspaper family, stayed behind to outline a plan of action. They decided that the new organization would have a national council made up of respected Canadians of all political persuasions, that groups would be formed in all the larger centres to lobby and to maintain relations with the press, and that an active, younger group, centred in Ottawa but with representation throughout Canada, would make up the executive committee. They would organize themselves quietly, and once the core of their national council was in place would hold a founding meeting and emerge full-fledged into public attention. Their goal was to surprise their opponents and impress government officials with the breadth of support for a national public broadcasting system. Graham offered to be chairman, Plaunt volunteered to be the unpaid secretary and the Canadian Radio League (CRL) was born.

Many years later, in 1958, Brooke Claxton tried to explain why the CRL was so successful in accomplishing its goals. In his address to the Alan Plaunt Memorial Lecture he said:

> *Many Canadians returning to Canada from service or study abroad see their country with a fresh vision of its greatness and a new recognition of the immensity of its opportunities. … The achievement of Alan, Graham and others associated with them in bringing into being the CBC and a nation-wide system of public service broadcasting was one of the most remarkable accomplishments ever to take place in our country. They had to cure ignorance, overcome apathy, arouse support, meet and master interested, organized and unfair opposition. … It is not easy to explain the reasons for this success. Partly it was due to the climate of the country, the sense of manifest growth and unfolding development that was stirring Canadians in every aspect of public service and private life.*

*

There are many letters on file written by Graham about the CRL, of which only the most representative will be reproduced below. The first letter that Graham wrote on behalf of the CRL was to Brooke Claxton on 6 October 1930. It was headed "The Canadian Radio League – Canadian Radio for Canadians. Brittania rules the waves – shall Columbia rule the wave lengths?"; "Columbia" refers to the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) in the United States:

> *This is to invite you to become a member of a provisional executive of the Canadian Radio League, which has as its object the protection of Canada from a radio system like that of the United States. Our method of operation is, resolutions, delegations to the Cabinet, articles in the press, and a highly reputable honorary executive masking the machinations of a small, disreputable executive consisting of yourself, myself, Alan Plaunt, George Smith, R.K. Finlayson, Margaret Southam, etc. I will not go into the headliners for publicity purposes, but the list is thoroughly respectable. Those present at the meeting were not so respectable, they were Alan Plaunt, Graham Spry and John Walker* [a bottle of scotch].
>
> *Alan is a gentleman of leisure and will do our dirty work aided by Margaret Southam. Our principal object is to see that the file Honourable R.B. will consult on his return* [R.B. Bennett was in Britain at the Imperial Conference] *is full of pro-Canadian radio newspaper clippings. We will also see, by routes well traced, that the various Ministers know that people throughout the Dominion "are viewing with alarm" the American monopoly's invasion of the sacred Canadian air.*

> *We are counting on the support of the Southam and Sifton press and have included Dafoe and one of the Southams on our honorary executive. ... We are raising a little money and Alan has done some preliminary cantering in Toronto. We have made a list of victims at $100 a stroke and want to raise about $1,000, for the costs of the agitation.*
>
> *Will you join this executive? We plan to hold a meeting probably in Montreal, considering the dry character of Ottawa hotels. In the meantime, keep this nefarious scheme dark. We wish to spring full fledged into the ether and fear the chloroform of the powers that be, if we spring too soon.*
>
> *The Maple Leaf Forever.*

Graham then sent a telegram to Lindsay Wellington and Gladstone Murray at the BBC in London:

> *Confidential group here alarmed American radio influences in Canada. Starting League to urge nationalization Canadian radio and implementing Aird Report. Could you send relevant information work BBC.*

He explained to J.W. Dafoe that their short-term goal was "to forestall, if possible, the granting of licenses to private companies before the cabinet has decided upon what action it will take on the radio question," and he asked if Dafoe would allow his name to be put forward at the founding meeting of the CRL as one of the honorary presidents. Graham then went to Montreal, met with Georges Pelletier of *Le Devoir*, got his support, and compiled a list of French Canadians to approach.

Alan Plaunt and, initially, Margaret Southam were similarly occupied in writing letters and speaking to friends. Alan knew Charles Bowman, who had served on the Aird Commission, and secured from him access to the government's files and to Bowman's own records of the hearings. These provided invaluable arguments for and against a public broadcasting system, gave the names of people and organizations who had made presentations to, or prepared reports for, the Aird Commission, and listed newspapers which had taken a position on the recommendations of the Aird Report. This information was used by Plaunt and Graham to prepare a pamphlet on the CRL and to solicit support from those who had already pronounced themselves in favour of a public broadcasting system.

The response to this initial testing of the waters was mostly encouraging. Norman Smith, editor of the United Farmers of Alberta's publication replied that he approved of the plans "most heartily and completely. No other strategy would be sound." The bishop of Rupert's Land said that it would afford him "very great pleasure to further in any way in any power the object set forth in your letter." E.J. Tarr, a Winnipeg lawyer and member of the national board of the ACC, wrote, "I approve of the objectives of the Radio League ... and shall be glad to have my name go on your Committee if it is any good to you." Brooke Claxton, however, initially was not encouraging, although he joined the executive committee in December:

> *I received your manifesto about radio. As you know, I have no radio and have never listened to radio if I could possibly avoid it. I'm really keen to have the program given to the Canadian people be made as bad as possible in order that the radio may pass out. For this reason alone I am in favour of government control.*
>
> *Really sympathetic as I am with your general purposes (and particularly the means used to date to develop them) I can see very little that I could do to help you and believe that you would be far better advised to regard me as a silent partner like Johnny Walker. I suggest that you have a high and mighty executive which will never meet and will not be anxious about receiving notices of meetings but only keen for publicity of any kind. That will give the kind of backing that Margaret and Alan and you want. You can then do exactly as you like.*

Dafoe had some reservations about publicly controlled radio:

> *As I explained to you over the telephone the reason I did not feel free to associate myself with the Canadian Radio League is that I feared it might hamper us in our free discussion of this somewhat complicated question. We have discussed radio a good deal: our position might be described as favorable to the idea embodied in the Aird Report with certain reservations expressing our doubts. We are a bit afraid of government monopoly developing into suppression of opinion – particularly radical, half-baked opinion.*
>
> *If Premier Ferguson controlled radio in Ontario he would not let anyone talk about politics but his own crowd. When a man as prejudiced and autocratic as Howard Ferguson can attain and retain the premiership of a province like Ontario one is chary of extending government powers of control over public opinion. I doubt whether Mr. Bennett in this respect is any better. ... That a government-owned series of radio stations could, if it would, give Canada a service that could not be got from the existing services is beyond dispute; and this is why we are willing to be convinced that something like the system proposed in the Aird Report should be adopted.*
>
> *Mr. Beatty's* [president of the CPR at the time] *idea, as set out in a conversation with me here, is that the CPR and the CNR should extend their present hook-ups using the existing privately owned stations or others that might take their place. He said it would not be necessary for the government to put any public money into stations at all. He is also in favour of some measure of control over programs and over stations as to equipment, qualifications of announcers – via a Federal commission.*

> *Of course if the League or you personally want to say a word for government-owned and operated radio, our columns are open.*

Even Graham's old friend, King Gordon, was uncertain about the advisability of public broadcasting. His letter to Graham is not on file but Graham's reply indicates the nature of Gordon's concerns:

> *You say you are not altogether in favour of Government ownership of broadcasting stations, unless it can be administered so that big business interests will not dominate them. The choice is perfectly clear. Radio will be operated by "big business" or it will be operated by the government.*

Graham knew several of the officials who were with the prime minister in London and he wrote to five of them during the week of 20 October, two weeks after the CRL's first meeting. The point of each letter was the same, to "put a word in the prime minister's ear" about the benefits of public broadcasting. The following excerpts are from the letter to W.D. Herridge, whom Graham knew through the League of Nations Society. Herridge was one of the prime minister's closest advisors and would become his brother-in-law a year later:

> *The subject of this letter is the control of radio broadcasting in the Dominion of Canada. I am writing it on behalf of a small group of people, all of whom you know well, who have become very interested in that question and are somewhat worried that radio broadcasting here may fall into the control of the American radio monopoly.*
>
> *The purpose of writing you is to ask you if you would not consent to try and interest the Prime Minister, while he is in London, in the great and valuable educational work which is being done by the British Broadcasting Company. We here feel that Mr. Bennett, if he has not already done so, need only see the work that organization is doing to create a healthy public opinion and to use the radio for the broadest national and educational purposes, to be convinced that Canada needs and will benefit from some such similar organization adapted to our different circumstances and wishes. This may seem a somewhat extraordinary request but the importance of keeping Canadian radio for Canadians needs no amplification and justifies me writing to you in this manner. ... The group in question, representing no one but themselves, and scrupulously avoiding any party lines, proposes if necessary to bring into being from coast to coast, an influential organization prepared to advocate the general principle of nationally owned and controlled radio for the Canadian people. Considerable preliminary work has been done and we are both surprised and pleased at the weight of the forces behind that objective. ... Whether the examination of* [the] *situation be thorough or cursory, the inevitable and palpable conclusion is that Canada is falling increasingly under American radio influences. To stop that increase is a sufficient objective, but to create a radio broadcasting system which can*

> *draw the different parts of Canada together, which can use the air not only for indirect advertising but more essentially for educational and public purposes, is one, I am sure, in which the Prime Minister will be instantly interested. If he is not already interested, would you not, considering the importance to Canadian development of preserving the Canadian air for Canadians, assist to the extent of interesting Mr. Bennett in this subject?*

On 12 November Graham wrote to Professor Duncan McArthur at Queen's University, stating that Bennett had cabled from London that no radio licenses were to be granted at the present time.

*

The formal founding meeting of the CRL took place on 8 December 1930, at the Chateau Laurier Hotel in Ottawa. The provisional executive was confirmed and a few new names were added. It consisted of Graham, Alan Plaunt, Margaret Southam, Ken Greene (president of the Ottawa Canadian Club), Brooke Claxton, Frank Scott (of McGill), Father Henri St. Denis (a French-Canadian professor of philosophy at the University of Ottawa), A.E. (Dal) Grauer (of Vancouver), Norman Smith (of the United Farmers of Alberta in Calgary), J.A. Corry (a professor at the University of Saskatchewan), E.A. Corbett (manager of the radio station CKUA of the University of Alberta in Edmonton), Hume Blake and Donald Matthews (of Toronto), Dean Arthur Moxon (of Saskatoon), the Reverend D.N. McLachlan (director of the Social Service Board of the United Church), George Smith (professor of history at the University of Toronto), Charlotte Whitton (of the Child Welfare Council in Ottawa), J.A. McIsaac (secretary of the Canadian Legion), Osler Hammish and Paul Nanton (of Winnipeg).

The press release announcing the formation of the CRL covered five single-spaced, legal-sized pages. It asserted that the CRL sprang into being almost spontaneously, without artificial effort, and with the expenditure of less than $100. It went on to point out that the national council represented all the geographical sections of Canada, French and English Canadians, finance and business, farmers and labour, universities, professional associations, and all churches and races. The press release listed twenty organizations ranging in size from the Canadian Trades and Labour Congress and the Canadian Legion to the Victoria Board of Trade and the Association d'éducation des Canadiens-Français de St. Boniface, and claimed the support of forty-four newspapers representing every province but Prince Edward Island. The release argued against radio's dependence on advertising:

> *The present basis of radio broadcasting in Canada is the operation of stations for advertising revenue. This means that radio is principally an advertising agency, and that its wider use for the development of national orchestras and choirs, for school broadcasts, for dramatic*

> *programmes, is subordinated to advertising considerations and is dependent upon the amount of revenue received from advertisers.*
>
> *The Canadian Radio League believes that radio broadcasting while valuable for certain limited commercial purposes, is by no means primarily a business. It is perhaps primarily an instrument for the cultivation of public opinion, of education and entertainment. It should make the home not merely a billboard, but a theatre, a concert hall, a club, a public meeting, a school, a university.*

A membership fee of $1 per year was agreed to, and a budget of $2,203, for the period from 1 December 1930 to 1 June 1931, was prepared. The CRL was planned as a winter project since Graham and Plaunt assumed they would be successful in getting the required legislation through the House of Commons in the current session.

In mid-December the CRL established an office on Wellington Street, across from the Parliament Buildings and two doors away from the Rideau Club. There were no paid officers and expenditures were kept to a minimum. Plaunt was in the office full-time and Graham came by several times a day with drafts of letters and press releases. The two men met over lunch and in the evenings to plan strategy. Others, like Ken Greene and Tom Moore, would often meet with them at the Rideau Club and it was there that they frequently found an opportunity to chat with government officials and collect valuable information. As Graham recalled many years later:

> *There was no rivalry, there were no salaries to be quarrelled over; it was all voluntary. The objective was very clear and well-defined. So the element of personal 'goofus-feather' hunting or rivalry for positions just never arose. We were having too much fun anyway and there was no room for this sort of atmosphere at all.*

Another pamphlet was quickly put together, translated by Georges Pelletier, and sent to everyone who might be supportive. Plaunt set about soliciting more support from national organizations and institutions, while Graham concentrated on developing more editorial support and on building alliances in Quebec. He and Pelletier planned a lunch at the Cercle Universitaire in Montreal on 19 December and succeeded in enlisting the support of Victor Doré, président-général of the Montreal School Board, and Canon Émile Chartier and Dr. Edouard Montpetit – vice-rector and secretary-general respectively of the University of Montreal. Shortly afterwards Louis St. Laurent, then president of the Canadian Bar Association, joined the league's national council and Eugène L'Heureux, editor of the Chicoutimi newspaper, joined the executive committee. Brooke Claxton was given the job of recruiting support from anglophones in Quebec. In January 1931 he wrote to Graham that he had solicited the assistance of the Right Reverend J.C. Farthing, bishop of Montreal. The one-line letter stated: "the Bishop will act."

On 9 January 1931 a delegation met with Alfred Duranleau, the minister responsible for issuing radio licenses. Graham introduced the members of the delegation and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to acquaint the minister with the views of the CRL and to indicate to the government the strength of public opinion for a national broadcasting company. Father Marchand spoke in French and on behalf of Quebec supporters; women were represented by Senator Cairine Wilson, Lady Kingsmill and Mrs. F.A. Wilson, president of the National Council of Women; Ken Greene and Russel Smart spoke for the business community. Other supporters included Tom Moore, president of the Trades and Labour Congress, and J.A. McIsaac, secretary of the Canadian Legion.

When Graham hinted at the CRL's numerical support, listing the organizations involved, how many members each had, and adding the circulation of supportive newspapers, the deputy minister, Alex Johnston, remarked sarcastically that "a rough calculation of the popular support your League claims to enjoy suggests to me that at least twenty million, of the Canadian population of ten million, are on your side." The impact of this delegation was nevertheless forceful. S.P. Edwards, head of communications at the Department of Marine, described it thus: "In all my experience of delegations it was the best organized, best run and most effective I have seen." The minister was also impressed. He announced afterwards that Canada must be protected from alien influences and that action would be taken. On 22 January the prime minister advised that radio legislation would be brought down in the spring session of the House. However, on 27 January, Premier Taschereau wrote to Duranleau, informing him that the government of Quebec would challenge the federal government's jurisdiction over broadcasting.

The CRL's membership was overwhelmingly in favour of complete federal control but it could not risk alienating Quebec if it wanted to win the overall fight. Graham wrote to Claxton: "MacKelcan on one side and Pelletier on the other cannot both be satisfied. ... Isn't this a typical Canadian situation? No wonder we are a nation of hypocrites, incapable for the most part, of mental honesty." Graham hoped to avoid the issue by trying to persuade the provinces to defend the federal position before the Supreme Court of Canada but failed: Manitoba, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan announced that they would side with Quebec; the other provinces chose to remain neutral. Graham then decided that the CRL had no choice but to act.

On 6 May 1931 Brooke Claxton argued the CRL's case before the Supreme Court:

> *The waves sent out by broadcasting may be received everywhere and there is no means of stopping them at a provincial border. Broadcasting, by reason of its very nature, is inevitably inter-provincial and not intra-provincial. ... Broadcasting is not only inter-provincial but it is international and requires international agreement. ... Broadcasting is*

> *the most powerful instrument ever devised for the development of public opinion and public taste. … Radio is a work and undertaking of the same class as lines of steam and other ships, railways, canals and telegraphs; it connects the provinces with other provinces and necessarily extends beyond the limits of a province.*

Pelletier had approved the content of the presentation beforehand and none of the CRL's Quebec support was eroded as a result of the decision to appear.

By virtue of being heard before the highest court in the land the CRL became, "instead of a group of agitators with doubtful motives or half-baked theories, a highly patriotic, nation-wide organization duly qualified to represent 'the public'." The Supreme Court ruled in favour of the federal government, Quebec appealed to the Privy Council in Britain, and Graham started looking for the $750 needed to send Claxton to London.

Graham was convinced, regardless of the personal cost, that the battle should be fought. In his journal on 5 November he wrote:

> *The idea is for a voluntary organization to state the extreme case for federal powers as against the provinces. That is the point that interests me, far more than the radio aspect, itself. We have had great difficulty in raising money… I had, therefore, to write a check for $500; that is for practically all my cash* [he sold his Power Corporation bonds for $550]. *Foolish, but what can one do?*

On 20 November Graham "saw Brooke Claxton, counsel of the noble radio league, off to London and wished I could go." The Privy Council handed down its decision on 9 February 1932, giving the dominion government sole rights over the air. A few years later, Alan Plaunt wrote a short history of the first few years of the CRL, stating that he was pleased Graham had been so determined to send Claxton to England, and adding: "From what I have heard subsequently that final decision was by no means as certain during the hearings as it appeared when announced and we have excellent authority for believing that Brooke's appearance turned the scales."

*

Between January 1931, when Quebec first challenged the federal government's jurisdiction over broadcasting, and February 1932, when the Privy Council made its decision, Graham and Alan Plaunt worked to solidify CRL support. Austin Weir, in *The Struggle for National Broadcasting in Canada*, described Graham's contribution:

> *Spry was the front man – writing, speaking, persuading, continually assembling information and, above all, building up his already numerous friendships and contacts in all levels of the government and across Canada. In this respect he was undoubtedly one of the ablest and most*

> *persuasive non-party advocates ever associated with an important popular movement in this country.*

Certainly, if Graham's voluminous correspondence is any indication, Weir's assessment is an accurate one.

In January 1931 Graham wrote to the Canadian Daily Newspapers Association, complaining that

> *The discussion of the purpose of the radio league in the press has been fairly satisfactory but not nearly so aggressive as we expected, from either point of view. Indeed, the Canadian Press will hardly carry any statement we issue and some of the papers ignore us.*

The manager of Gooderham and Worts in Toronto felt differently, as he stated in a January issue of *Saturday Night*:

> *This "League" emits endless streams of propaganda in favour of Government ownership of radio, which is transmitted by wire to newspapers throughout the country, either direct, through Special Correspondents at Ottawa, or through the Canadian Press. Some interested newspapers give these dispatches front page space, with screaming head-lines the width of the page, just as though radio broadcasting were the most important matter before the Canadian public at the moment.*
>
> *In its zeal and enthusiasm, has not the "League" o'er-reached itself? One does not usually use a trip-hammer to crack a louse!*

In February, Frank Underhill, who was at the University of Toronto and on the editorial board of the *Canadian Forum*, sent Graham the galley proofs of a nasty article attacking the BBC and the CRL. It was written by Murray Gibbon, CPR's publicity manager and one of the CRL's chief opponents, and was to be published in the March issue of the *Forum*. The first paragraph set the tone: "The so-called Aird Report on Radio Broadcasting was supposed to be dead and buried, but apparently it has left a posthumous child in the Canadian Radio League – quite a lusty infant too, judging from the noise it is making in the newspapers." Underhill asked if Graham or Plaunt would reply in the following issue of the *Forum*, adding, "The more damage you do to Mr. Murray Gibbon the better." Graham replied immediately:

> *I shall be delighted to reply to Murray Gibbon. Why is it our opponents must be sarcastic and superficial? I am going to reply as vigorously as I can, though Mr. Gibbon happens to be one of my employers. He is literary correspondent of the Canadian Clubs of Montreal, which provides nearly one-eighth of all the Association revenue.*

Graham wrote to the editors of friendly newspapers, telling them that Gibbon's article was so full of mistakes it should be published as widely as possible and then blasted on the editorial pages, and providing them with the information necessary for a rebuttal. He also sent a copy of the article to Gladstone Murray of the BBC, because it had stated that the BBC was unpopular in Britain; he suggested that the BBC ask the London office of the CPR for an explanation.

Graham's article in the April issue of the *Forum* began by pointing out one major inaccuracy in Gibbon's paper. He then suggested that the whole paper was full of such inaccuracies and stated that "It is not the intention of this present article to concern itself too much with Mr. Gibbon's absurdities. They need no examination; they condemn themselves by their tone and their palpable inaccuracy." Graham went on to use his space – a full page more than Gibbon had been given – to present the case for a public system.

The CPR at first refused to respond to any of the charges. It was not until the BBC threatened to refer the matter to the British House of Commons that the CPR's London office finally wrote, stating that Gibbon was a founder of the Canadian Authors Association and had been asked, in that capacity, to represent the case of the artists in the controversy.

Gibbon wrote to Graham. His letter is not on file but Graham's reply, dated 14 April 1931, suggests that Gibbon was not pleased:

> *I very much regret that you should have interpreted my reply to your article in the* Canadian Forum *in a personal sense. ... a scrupulous reading of your article on radio ... provides me with no ground for accepting your request to apologize for the word "erstwhile." To that request I am only able to reply courteously, but negatively.*
>
> *Both of us wrote the articles for the* Forum *in our personal capacities. ... No grounds whatever exist, therefore, for your attempt to implicate my employers.*

At approximately the same time Graham wrote to another Canadian Club member in Granville, Nova Scotia:

> *The fact is my connection with the Radio League will probably cause some criticism at our next Annual Meeting, and already some of the private broadcasting interests have endeavoured to influence some of our Executive to have me reprimanded or discharged, but these members laughed at the idea.*

Graham's article in the *Forum* was a condensed version of "A Case for Nationalized Broadcasting," which he had written for the winter issue of *Queen's Quarterly*. The following are excerpts from that article:

> *We have taken as a matter of course a development of science which enables the human voice to be heard around the world. We await, unstirred by the romance and majesty of this vast agency of communication, the casually anticipated pleasure of seeing on our own walls from our own chairs the living picture of some event instantaneously transmitted to our sight and hearing from the far-off place of its occurence. The instrument that was a toy ten years ago has become almost an Aladdin's lamp to-day. The urgent question is, who shall control this*

> *lamp? Who shall administer this instrument of such mighty and blossoming power? … Two sweeps of the broom are necessary to clear the ground of impediments to a calm consideration of the question. Broadcasting, in the first place, is no more a business than a public school system is a business, though businesses, such as the manufacture and sale of equipment, may be dependent on it. Broadcasting, primarily, is an instrument of education in its widest significance, ranging from play to learning, from recreation to the cultivation of public opinion, and it concerns and influences not any single element in the community, but the community as a whole. Nor is broadcasting to be compared to a publication. There may be similarities between broadcasting and publishing, but while there may be any number of publications and any number of printing-presses, there can only be a limited number of stations broadcasting over a limited number of wave-lengths. … The press is, by nature, free. Radio is, by nature, a partial or complete monopoly. … The only question ultimately is, in whose hands shall this concentration of power be placed? … No one objects to indirect advertising, to the sponsored programme accompanied by a brief announcement that this programme is offered by, say, the Imperial Oil Company, but who does not object to long puffs of some product in the middle of programmes, speeches, street addresses and telephone numbers before every item? Whether the final control of radio be vested in private or public hands, direct advertising will have to be reduced or eliminated. The home, after all, is not a billboard.*

It was also in the spring of 1931 that Graham wrote to F.I. Ker, the president of the Daily Newspapers Association, at the *Hamilton Spectator*. Graham stated that he and Plaunt would be in Toronto on the day of the association's annual meeting. He asked, "If it is not presumption on my part, may I volunteer to assist in any way I can, should the Association desire it?" Graham and Plaunt attended the meeting and distributed CRL pamphlets entitled "Radio Advertising – A Menace to the Newspaper and a Burden to the Public" to those present. They stayed after the meeting and met "practically every editor and business manager there."

*

The following story is not recorded in the original CRL papers. One undated letter from Austin Weir refers to it, and Weir mentions it in his book. Graham referred to the story years later when he was writing a paper on "Radio Broadcasting and the Art of Lobbying." The incident occurred in the spring of 1931:

> *W.D.* [Bill] *Herridge, the Prime Minister's brother-in-law, was a former secretary of the Canadian League* [of Nations Society]. *He had been a major overseas and also a member of the Liberal party. … Lack of sympathy for and probably indeed, from, the Liberal leader Mr. Mackenzie King led to "the Major" leaving the Liberal party and allying himself with Mr. Bennett. Herridge had been honorary secretary of the*

> *Canadian League before Brooke Claxton and had similar connections – church, university, army, law, and energetic action in first the Liberal and then the Conservative party. His alliance with R.B. Bennett offered him scope for his fertile, impatient mind and energies – the alliance was useful to both. It was strengthened by Herridge marrying Mildred Bennett, the Prime Minister's sister – an almost European or medieval political alliance. Herridge, early in R.B.'s rule, was appointed Canadian Ambassador in Washington, but there were frequent visits to Ottawa even before regular air service had developed, and "His Excellency" was frequently to be seen in and out of the East Block and the Rideau Club. To convince such a key power in the Prime Minister's circle as Herridge was a very important objective and I made it one of my particular tasks. An observation of his habits and routes to and during such visits led me to take a parlour seat on the CPR train to Montreal in the knowledge that Herridge had gone aboard. I entered the same car and, in due course, tactfully taken, I began a conversation which lasted most of the trip. Herridge got off at a junction west of Montreal to catch the train to Washington. I got off at Westmount and went to see Austin Weir at his home. The purpose of this visit was to tell Weir, head of the CNR Radio Service and a great ally of the Canadian Radio League, that I had convinced Herridge to accept the broad principles of the Aird Report as advocated by the League.*

In Weir's retelling of the story he added that Herridge "became a firm though silent supporter, and on his frequent visits to Ottawa, he was one of the League's willing channels to Bennett."

In June 1931 Graham motored to Columbus, Ohio, to speak at the Institute for Education by Radio Conference, then continued on to New York and Washington, visiting broadcasting stations and attending hearings before the Federal Radio Commission (the equivalent of Canada's CRTC today).

*

There are very few personal letters on file during the time of the Graham's involvement with the CRL, but some official letters include a personal note. For instance, in a letter to a friend at Queen's Graham wrote:

> *The Radio League is superb fun. It takes all my spare time, but is a great education in respectable intrigue. We have the press support, the representation of every national element, and now are getting our local Duchesses to work, in perhaps, the most amusing lobby Ottawa has seen for years. We are sparing no weapon, not even afternoon teas.*

To Colonel McCullough at the Conservatory of Music in Hamilton he stated:

> [The Radio League] *is my evening's amusement. It has wiped out my*

> *skating, taken my weekends and is costing me my spare cash, but it is worth it.*

He told George Ferguson, still at the *Winnipeg Free Press*:

> *I have never enjoyed myself so much as this winter. The Radio League has filled my week-ends and nights, while the Canadian Club, with such itineraries as the waterways, the BNA Act, and French Canada, has made the days enthralling. The radio agitation has led to many interesting battles, and the great experience in handling public controversies. It is great fun to have made a fuss that is front-page stuff in Canada, the United States and Great Britain, and to take on the "power trust" of the United States and the CPR.*

In his diary he recorded the views he heard about the Depression. Mostly they were anti-American and anti-capitalism, views that indirectly helped to build support for the objectives of the CRL. Dafoe, for instance, placed the blame for the economic situation squarely at the feet of the American government. Graham quoted:

> *There can be no ordered economic life and a return to prosperity on a world scale until the American people become civilized. I have tried all my life to have a faith in the decency and intelligence of the American people … but it is difficult to retain it now. The stuff they take over the radio is enough to convince me they are not civilized, and until they feel their part in the world, what chance is there for international action? … The United States is hoarding gold, it is insisting on the payment of its debts, but will not take payment in kind, and it is erecting higher and higher tariff walls. And it will not take any real part in international questions. Until it does, how can there be anything like a return to prosperity?*

A few days later Graham recorded a comment made by John Stevenson, Ottawa correspondent for the *Times* of London: "Capitalism is done; the system has collapsed so completely that it can never be restored," and added that similar sentiments were being expressed elsewhere.

Just before Christmas 1931, an incident demonstrated the importance of Canadian control of the broadcasting system. For months the BBC had been organizing a round-the-world Commonwealth Christmas broadcast that would last for several hours as the message went from west to east, beginning in Britain, through some African colonies to India, Australia and New Zealand, across the Pacific to Canada, and back to Britain. Every country and many regions of larger countries like Canada would participate. It would begin with a message from King George V and the leaders of the countries involved, followed by recordings selected by each country or region which were typical of the Christmas season.

During the preparation for the broadcast the BBC asked Canada to arrange for the roar of Niagara Falls to be picked up, and to arrange for a reserve channel over the Atlantic via Long Island in case of bad atmospheric conditions. Problems allegedly arose because of contractual obligations between Bell Telephone in Canada and AT&T in the United States for use of land lines to transmit the broadcast. However, there was reason to believe that the Americans were deliberately trying to block the broadcast; Graham maintained that he had been told by Americans that they were fighting with Britain over control of Canada's broadcasting system. The CRL reported every detail of this squabble in news releases. When a savage attack on American interference was issued, it

> *got very good publicity, a whole front page column. These things don't happen by accident. It means you phone through to your friends and say, "Here's a real story and I'll have it over to you in the next half-hour, just be ready for it. It's exclusive now, remember, so play it up and I won't give it to anyone else."*

In the end Gladstone Murray, who was in charge of organizing the broadcast for the BBC, cancelled the entire event, knowing his decision would help the CRL's cause. He cabled Graham on 24 December:

> *Christmas programme irrevocably off because of stupidity or malignance somewhere. Probably combination. Bennett strenuous but too late. I am gradually repairing damage this end… Strong personal view that fracas godsend. Clearing air and aligning forces.*

In January 1932 the CRL organized another delegation to meet with the minister of Marine. Father Marchand "lectured the minister on the Pope's latest Encyclical which, he was assured, practically exhorted Canada to set up a nationally owned radio system!"

When the Privy Council handed down its decision in February 1932, a parliamentary committee on Radio Broadcasting was established to consider the Aird Report, advise and recommend a scheme for radio broadcasting, and report on the most satisfactory agency for carrying out such a scheme. The CRL encouraged its members to appear before the committee and, if they could not appear, to either write letters of support for the views of the CRL or to give it permission to appear on their behalf. The cable to Hector McInnis in Halifax said:

> *Parliamentary Committee well underway. Opposition from private owners strong and well financed. Our case might look somewhat dark but there is strong sympathy, or at least open-mindedness among principal members of Committee. Please write letter to Chair giving strong support for Radio League position and listing others in Halifax who agree, especially Tories.*

Another cable, from Frank Eliason to M.N. Campbell, MP, said: "Am instructing Canadian Radio League to represent us before Committee."

The CRL made its first appearance before the committee on 15 March. Another submission, much longer and more detailed, was presented by Graham on 18 April. The files indicate that Graham appeared individually before the committee five times, Corbett and Claxton each appeared once, Plaunt appeared twice, and Graham, Plaunt and Father St. Denis appeared once as a group. Graham concluded one of his presentations with these words:

> *The value, the significance of an intelligently directed system of radio broadcasting to the varied and scattered people of Canada needs no emphasis or demonstration. It is patent to all. Here is a great and happy opportunity for expressing, for achieving that which is Canada. It is here and now; it may never come again. Upon this Committee rests the high privilege of seizing that opportunity.*

He concluded another presentation with these often-quoted words: "It is a choice between the State and the United States."

Graham and Plaunt then decided it would be beneficial for Gladstone Murray of the BBC to appear before the committee, and succeeded in convincing the committee chairman to invite him to appear; Vincent Massey contributed $400 for Murray's passage. It was later reported that Murray "had more influence over their [the committee's] ultimate findings than any other person."

*

While the committee hearings were in full swing, another problem presented itself. On 17 March, a Friday evening, Graham was at the Rideau Club hosting a dinner for Lionel Curtis of London when he was called to the telephone – it was the prime minister. Bennett told Graham that there had been a cabinet meeting during the previous week and that he was disappointed at the lack of support from the prairie provinces for a national broadcasting system. He asked Graham if he could do something about it. Graham assured Bennett that he could and that the support would be forthcoming within a few days. He left the Rideau Club immediately, turning the dinner over to someone else, went home, checked train schedules, planned an itinerary, and made notes on business details to sort out the next day. On Saturday morning he sent out several telegrams. The first was to Georges Pelletier, as he had to go to Montreal to catch the westbound train:

> *Could you dine with me University Club Mansfield St. seven pm tonight. Very urgent. Please wire reply.*

The cable to Paul Nanton in Winnipeg said:

> *Will arrive CNR Tuesday* [it was actually Monday] *ten a.m. Please arrange long session with Finlayson, Tarr, Dafoe, Nichols, McTavish and especially Colonel Osler. ... Leaving six thirty pm Monday for Saskatoon.*

Similar telegrams went to McQueen in Saskatoon and Corbett in Edmonton. Graham either wired the relevant government official himself and asked for an interview, or asked the local CRL members to do so for him.

On the long train trip from Montreal to Winnipeg he planned his strategy. The art of convincing, he said, was to learn the prejudices of the person one is approaching and to use that knowledge in constructing one's arguments.

In Winnipeg Graham spent an hour with Premier John Bracken, whose prejudices he knew well. Bracken was the leader of the Progressive government and Graham had worked for him during an election campaign several years earlier. Bracken listened to his arguments and agreed to have a resolution introduced into the legislature immediately. In Regina Graham met with Attorney General N.A. MacPherson, who told him that it would be impossible to get a resolution through the legislature because the House was rising that week. However, MacPherson promised that he would personally introduce a resolution at the next cabinet meeting and would cable the prime minister, with a copy to Graham.

In Edmonton Graham was received by Premier John Brownlee, whom he had met several times before. As Graham later recalled, "older men in politics were interested in young men who were foolish enough to get interested in politics so he was quite sympathetic and friendly to me." Brownlee also promised a resolution:

> *So I had bowled three times and hit the wicket three times and I so cabled the Prime Minister. Although I don't remember doing so I can't believe that satisfaction would be contained by the mere expense of a telegram.*

On 7 April Graham wrote in his diary:

> *We have won. We have defeated the CPR the CMA* [the Canadian Manufacturers' Association] *the NBC the CBS and ignorance. Today, the Prime Minister sent to Alan and I, by way of Gladstone Murray, a message of congratulation. Something will be done. "We will show the States that Canada is no appendage."*

On 2 May Graham wrote:

> *The radio battle is won. I have seen the report as it will be considered tomorrow, and chatted briefly with the PM and Bill Herridge about it... I expect the report in a day or so.*

On 8 May his diary reads:

> *Tomorrow, the report of the radio committee will be tabled. It is based on the principles I enunciated. Indeed, there is hardly a line that I would disagree with. It was signed unanimously Friday afternoon. A good fight, a clean victory.*

On 9 May Graham and Plaunt cabled Gladstone Murray in Britain: "Report today complete victory." In their turn they received cables and letters from supporters across Canada. Those quoted below are from

Chester Martin, Graham's history professor at the University of Manitoba; Arnold Heeney, his oldest friend; Larry MacKenzie, of Oxford and Geneva; and Brooke Claxton:

> *The report of the Radio Committee seems so satisfactory that I hope it is not too soon to congratulate you upon the success of your big fight.*
>
> ***
>
> *You must be immensely pleased that the House has indicated unanimously that what I gather to be substantially the plan of the Radio League will be the foundation of immediate legislation on the question. I followed the whole thing very closely in the papers, and congratulate you very much on the outcome.*
>
> ***
>
> *May I extend my belated congratulations on your success in the Radio matter. It was a thoroughly good piece of work, and I am delighted that you were able to put it across. I hear a good deal of comment about it with which your name is coupled, and all of it very favourable.*
>
> ***
>
> *You deserve the thanks of a grateful country for the extraordinarily fine results of the work of yourself and Alan.*

On 16 May, when the broadcasting bill was tabled in the House of Commons, more cables and letters were received. The Honourable N.W. Rowell, a friend of Plaunt's who had been helpful in getting business support for the CRL, stated:

> *The introduction of the Bill by the Government to implement the report of the Parliamentary Radio Committee is certainly an occasion for very sincere congratulations to you and Alan Plaunt. You have done a magnificent piece of work, for which the country is indebted to you.*

Vincent Massey wrote:

> *In sending my cheque for $400 which I owe Alan Plaunt, may I take this opportunity of offering you my most sincere congratulations on your endeavours on behalf of radio broadcasting. All of us who believe in radio as a national service owe you a debt of profound gratitude for the self-sacrificing and skilful work which you have done in the last few years. My very warmest congratulations.*

Praise also came from the highest seat of power. On 9 July Graham recorded in his diary:

> *It has been a stirring six weeks or so, since I wrote. ... The radio conflict is over. For several days, influenced, weakly I admit, by both a desire to attain security, and also, I hope, by a wish to see the radio through, I played with the idea of going after, no, of accepting, if offered, a commissionership. To three people, I admitted my desire. But when the day*

> *came to decide, I was virulently hating my own anomalous position. I wiped out that weakness. Only regret remains, and we are pushing hard for a commission composed of* [Gladstone] *Murray,* [W.A.] *Steel and, say, Barbeau. ... I had just come from R.B.* [Bennett] *and Bill Herridge at the Rideau Club. I was unmodestly ecstatic. R.B. had been almost exaggerated in his kindness. "It may well be, Graham, that you have saved Canada for the British Commonwealth." My views on a whole series of points had been accepted. And I was pleased.*

The Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC) was established. Gladstone Murray was considered for the position of chairman but in the end Hector Charlesworth, editor of *Saturday Night*, was appointed. Thomas Maher of Quebec City, a forestry engineer, a director of radio station CHRC and publisher of *Le Journal*, was named vice-chairman. W.A. Steel, who had been a technical advisor to the radio committee and was one of the CRL's choices, was appointed as the third commissioner.

Graham resigned from the ACC and he and Plaunt moved to Toronto. They had purchased and were now publishing the *Farmers' Sun*, a weekly newspaper. They kept a watchful eye on the CRBC and wrote editorials about broadcasting, but the CRL was essentially dormant.

The CRBC was not a success. Charlesworth was not an administrator, and MPs and bureaucrats, who were accustomed to having a say in the awarding of radio licenses and felt their power being eroded, were not helpful. The CRBC was not given enough money to do the job properly and opponents of a public system continued to fight against the commission at every opportunity.

In a May 1933 editorial in the *Weekly Sun* (as the *Farmers' Sun* was now called), Graham attacked the politicians:

> *The debate on the CRBC in the House of Commons was magnificent in its stupidity, and pathetic in its bitterness. It is such debates that call into question the permanence of Parliamentary institutions. Leaders and members alike displayed a remarkable capacity for ignoring the provisions of the report of the parliamentary committee last spring, the Radio Act, and the elementary facts of broadcasting. It is, indeed, fortunate that parliamentary debates are not broadcast.*

In 1935, at a conference on Canadian-American affairs in Canton, Ohio, Graham made his most blistering attack on the radio situation in Canada. It came as a great shock to many that a man who had fought so hard for the CRBC was now condemning it. Graham's speech was long: he gave the background leading up to the passage of the legislation in 1932, explained what he saw as the CRBC's fatal weaknesses, and outlined how he would restructure the Canadian broadcasting system. Near the end of the speech he said:

> *The Canadian experiment has failed. ... It provides no satisfactory*

> *alternative to the privately operated American networks. … Its regulations with respect to comment on public institutions are menacing and vicious. Neither as a means of giving Canadians an adequate Canadian service to meet the Americanizing influences of American networks, nor as a means for providing a free flow of opinion which alone promises an alternative to force in change has the Commission been more than a modest success. It has failed, and some new experiment is called for.*

In 1936 a new broadcasting act was tabled. The CRBC was replaced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Alan Plaunt was named to the Board of Governors, and Gladstone Murray was appointed general manager.

Graham continued to follow the developments of national broadcasting in Canada, but from a distance. When he moved to London in 1938 friends continued to send him all the relevant reports and government documents. His many visitors kept him up-to-date on broadcasting issues, and on his frequent trips back to Canada he made a point of meeting the new players in the field. In 1958 he spent almost eight months in Ottawa revitalizing the CRL and fighting, this time, for the preservation of the CBC.

1932-1935

The League for Social Reconstruction; the CCF; the *Farmers' Sun*; the *Canadian Forum*; Irene Biss.

Elect SPRY – Your Candidate in Broadview
Vote C.C.F. – For a Real Change
(Campaign poster, 1935 general election)

In October 1931 H.S. Arkell, of the Livestock Pool, dropped by the office of the ACC. He told Graham that the *Farmers' Sun* was going to be sold and asked if he was interested. A few days later, Graham wrote to his friend, George Ferguson:

> *The paper is insolvent. It has no property except the office chairs and the wastepaper baskets. Its bank loans and accounts payable exceed by thousands the assets, and its circulation has dropped bitterly these last few months. And heaven knows what is on the cards for the farm movement in Ontario. But … I am inclined to take a gamble. … There are two aspects to the problem of making up one's mind. At present, I am secure, respectable, free; I have no enemies, I know everybody, I am almost a sane, common sense citizen – if only I had lost more in the market, I would look almost like a financial man. Ease, agreeable work, respectability, freedom to come and go through office doors or across continents and oceans – all very nice. Should I, in these perilous times, drop all this, sink everything I have, and burn all my bridges? I am trying to answer this question by answering the two problems or aspects upon which that answer depends.*
>
> *The essential problem is, will it pay? If it won't, if there is no reasonable chance that it will, then, of course, I must remain respectable and foreswear, for the time, the dusty ways of agitation. … The second one … Will the* Farmers' Sun *enable me to become a regrettable agitator, with a political position somewhere between the farmer movement and the liberals – a rather socialistic, yet not purely agrarian agitator; public ownership, low tariffs, etc. As I see the next generation of Canadian politics, the battle will be between the traditions of Mr. Sweezey and those of Sir Adam Beck; the state of mind of Lord North Taschereau and of J.E. Brownlee; and the issue will be – who is to get the cream of this great dominion's unlimited natural resources – you and I and the other*

> *poor bozoes, or Primate Holt and Deacon Gundy? The west, in this battle, is going to be western, for a while, until these Development Boards and Rotary clubs do their dirty work – and while there will be lots of fun there, the real battle will be elsewhere. It won't be in* B.C. *that it will be fought and won. Nor in the Maritimes. Nor in medieval Quebec. It will be fought in Ontario in the backwoods, where there are still axes, Scotch accents, and ministers drawing down $600 a year. What happens in Ontario, plus what happens in the west, will make the Canada of this age and generation. And isn't the best fun going to be in Ontario; and would not the proprietor of a paper, with the* Sun's *evil reputation be in a fair way to get into the thick of the battle? … If it does not mean that … I would not go into it. … I would not enter the* Sun *under any other circumstances than that of complete commander-in-chief, owning the majority of the stock, and being independent of any elected board, council, committee or congregation. Independence, that is the primary condition.*

At this time Mackenzie King approached Graham again to see if he would be interested in a position as national organizer in the new Liberal head office. Graham gave some thought to combining the ownership of the *Sun* with working for the Liberal party. What follows is from Graham's diary, written in December 1931:

> *I spent December 3 and 4 in Toronto, and met the board of the Farmers' Publishing Company, … and repeated … that I was a semi-detached Liberal, that I wanted to get into Parliament, and that I was opposed, for the present at least, to the Farmers' entering politics as a group. … When in Toronto, I saw Harry Sifton who said as a financial proposition the paper had little future, but as a "Graham Spry organ" it would give you a modest pay check, you would have all the fun in the world, and live to be 125.*
>
> *Stenning of* Maclean's *painted no rosy vision … Philip Fisher of Southams Montreal said that it was "a terrible proposition." And Brooke Claxton said I should steer clear. I suggested that I might combine the Liberal job with owning the paper. He said that was impossible. I am not going gambling without being forewarned.*
>
> *I wrote a long letter on Dec. 8th, showed it to Col. Biggar, and sent it. I had made the offer, knowing it would be accepted. The die was cast and today* [11 December] *W.C. Good's letter saying that the board met yesterday and accepted the offer arrived.*

When Alan Plaunt expressed an interest in joining Graham in the *Farmers' Sun* venture, Graham wrote him:

> *I have your letter of December 9th and have been carefully considering your expression of interest in the purchase I am about to make of the* Farmers' Sun. *… There is, of course, every advantage in my accepting your offer to join the company which would be organized when the*

> *purchase was completed. … Let me be utterly frank, however, not merely in my own interest, but in your own. The* Farmers' Sun *is a paper that has had a very dubious financial history. It has recently suffered an impairment of some $44,000 of its paid-up capital; when it was owned by Goldwin Smith, it lost $30,000; and its money making powers have never been great. It is, in a word, a sheer gamble, and a gamble at a time when gambling is peculiarly risky.*

On 15 January 1932 the *Farmers' Sun* legally became Graham's; within days he sold half the shares to Plaunt. For the next six months the day-to-day operation of the paper was left in the hands of a manager while Graham and Plaunt worked with the CRL and Graham continued with the ACC. In March he noted in his diary:

> *all three are commanding my attention – radio, Canadian Club and* Farmers' Sun *– all three, really resting finally upon me. But I have been gay, active, rushing from city to city, and dictating now a letter on radio, now on Jenny Lee, now on scrub bulls. A delicious two months. Full of worry. Full of thought and the matching of wits. Not unproductive. A good two months.*

In May, Graham told his mother that he was keeping his apartment in Ottawa, where he intended to spend his weekends until the fall: "There is a lad living with me, and that splits the overhead a little. Above all, I want to be able to keep in touch with Kingsmere and with the Economic conference, especially Kingsmere." In July he admitted that the romance with Betty Smart was over. His diary records the turmoil he experienced:

> *There must be excoriation. The anguish must end: it's so damn foolish that I should not have enough will to end* [it]. … *But breaking through these ideas* [trying to get the *Farmers' Sun* out of debt], *dragging me back to Ottawa unwisely and expensively, is that debilitating and foolish yearning for companionship, for that not-to-be found communion, what Betty calls, and can so completely give, understanding. … I am 32, I am struggling to make a living. I want to change things in society, because in that, I feel alive. I have a battle on my hands. What nonsense to … dally with the impossible, and to let myself be so affected that my work, and sleep, and common sense, are threatened. … And now I have written the end. All that communion, that music, and flowers, that mountain, and stars in cold skies; it must be a pleasant experience, and a past. All has been honourable, decent, and until the last, beautiful. Almost two years. … What a combination of qualities, she has. Yes, unique. I love her, love them all, utterly, now. She knows I do, and it means much to her that I do. She said, that in a way, she loves me and always will. But beyond that we never discussed more.*

The next diary notes are dated 11 March 1933, eight months later:

> *The last few months have been full of worries, and alarums; the* Sun *has been up against it badly on several occasions, I have had to borrow*

> *$2,000 from Alan – my lot* [in Rockcliffe] *as security – his interest and generosity the motive – but we are turning out a better paper almost every issue. But it is a hard struggle, and it is fortunate that I cannot worry.*
>
> *Our prophecies have come substantially true; there is a farm movement in Ontario, and it is socialistic. The old idea of a left-wing Liberal party, so freely promised in private conversation by Liberal leaders, has not been created; on the contrary, the Liberal party is either rightward or centrist or backward. ... I now publicly describe myself as a socialist and did so in my last broadcast... I am working with the LSR; and I am assisting in editing a sort of "Yellow Book" for Canada.* [It was published in 1935 under the title *Social Planning for Canada*.]

*

Graham joined and became actively involved in two major movements in the 1930s. The first was the League for Social Reconstruction (LSR), the second the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). The LSR was founded by Frank Underhill, a professor of History at the University of Toronto, and Frank Scott, a professor of Law at McGill University in Montreal. Both were known to Graham, Underhill because of his involvement with the *Canadian Forum*, while Scott was a member of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs and was on the executive committee of the CRL. Both men were Oxford graduates. Like many other Canadians who studied in England in the early 1900s, they were influenced by the Fabian Society, an organization of intellectual socialists which advocated a reconstruction of society to achieve economic equality through democracy.

Underhill and Scott met for the first time in August 1931 at the World Economic Planning Conference in Williamstown, Massachusetts. They discussed "the grim impact of the Depression on the lives of Canadians and the lack of evidence that the Government was taking action to meet the most serious of human needs – let alone formulating policies that would guarantee stability, security and social justice in post-depression Canada. Underhill proposed that he and Scott should bring together small groups in Toronto and Montreal that would give serious thought to those issues and, in consultation, work on a draft manifesto for a Canadian Fabian Society."

The Montreal group met in Frank and Marian Scott's home. It included King Gordon, who had just arrived in Montreal to take up a teaching position at the United Theological College; Eugene Forsey, professor of Economics at McGill; Jacques Bieler, an engineer; Joe Mergler, a labour lawyer; David Lewis, a third-year law student, about to be awarded a Rhodes Scholarship, and Frank Scott. The members of the Toronto group were all teaching at the University of Toronto: Frank Underhill (History), Harry Cassidy (Social Sciences], Joe Parkinson and Irene Biss (Economics), Eric Havelock at Victoria College and George

Grube at Trinity College. Graham joined the group a few months later, when he started to spend more time in Toronto, as did Escott Reid, another Rhodes Scholar who was now national secretary of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs.

The two groups met in Toronto in January 1932 to choose a name for the organization, approve the manifesto, appoint an executive committee, and discuss the program of activities. Frank Underhill became the first president, J.S. Woodsworth accepted the role of honorary president, and Isabel Thomas, a University of Toronto graduate teaching English in one of the secondary schools in Toronto, was named secretary-treasurer. The social measures which the LSR advocated – described as "radical," even "communistic" by establishment spokespersons of the time – included "provision for minimum wages, the right to collective bargaining, insurance for workers against accident, illness and old age, unemployment insurance, and publicly organized and financed health, hospital, and medical services."

By the beginning of 1933 there were seventeen branches of the LSR from Victoria to Montreal, the largest being in Toronto and Montreal, each of which had at least 150 members. A year later there was a branch in the Atlantic provinces, in Sackville, New Brunswick. In April 1933 the founding members, with the exception of David Lewis who was now at Oxford, invited another dozen or so members to a weekend working party at a Burlington farm where they further developed their objectives and outlined the chapters for *Social Planning for Canada*. A few months later a fund-raising campaign was organized to establish a permanent office and Graham was hired as the national secretary, on a half-time basis, at a salary of $100 a month. The campaign fell far short of expectations and although there was often not enough money in the bank to pay Graham, he continued working for the LSR until 1936.

*

Concurrent with these activities J.S. Woodsworth, an independent MP representing labour, was organizing the CCF, a group holding similar views to those of the LSR but which would be actively political. It held its first national convention in Regina in July 1933. The name, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, had already been agreed on, but its manifesto, very similar in content to the LSR's, was adopted in Regina and J.S. Woodsworth was named leader. Graham attended the Regina convention as a delegate and as a reporter for the *Farmers' Sun*. Shortly after the convention, the LSR core group was described by George Ferguson in the *Winnipeg Free Press* as the "CCF brain trust" – a term picked up from American newspapers where it was used to describe the intellectuals who surrounded President Roosevelt.

In 1934, when Graham was elected vice-president of the Ontario CCF Council, he rented space at 225 Richmond St. West in Toronto. This became the headquarters of the LSR, the Ontario CCF, and all the other activities in which he was involved at the time.

*

In April 1933 Russel Smart was in Britain. He sent Graham a telegram asking about the possibility of some sort of cooperation between the CCF in Canada and the Labour Party in Britain. Early in May 1933 Graham wrote to Underhill:

> *Russel Smart K.C. returned today from England; he is a convinced and complete socialist; he wants to join the LSR at once, and the CCF. ... Russel wants me to leave immediately for England, and see the Socialist League, Fabian society, Labor party etc. etc. ... He will pay my steamship fare, and will see that I am given hospitality and sent to the Derby conference. Would the LSR duly write me and authorize me to go? ... Russel Smart will be a great asset. ... He should be put on the Ontario CCF council of 36 – and while on this point, I might say I want to be on that council also if I can be of use.*

In England, as well as visiting Betty Smart and Gilbert Ryle, Graham attended Socialist League meetings, visited the offices of the New Fabian Research Bureau, the Co-operative Party and the Co-operative Union. Russel Smart provided him with a letter of introduction to Sir Stafford Cripps. Irene Biss provided a letter to George Cadbury, a member of the Socialist League who had been a fellow student of hers at Cambridge in the 1920s.

*

The *Farmers' Sun*, then the *Weekly Sun* always lost money. When Graham became involved with the CCF, Alan Plaunt asked that he disassociate himself from the *Sun* so that it would not become identified as a CCF paper. In September 1933, for one dollar, Graham signed an agreement giving Plaunt his shares in the *Sun*. In October the paper reported a loss of $18,000; in January 1934, the net loss was $21,000. Plaunt's father concluded that "I cannot recommend you to sink more capital into this venture." The *Sun* continued for a few more months; then, in May 1934, when Plaunt was about to shut it down, Graham wrote to him:

> *It is apparent that unless there is some unexpected visitation from a financial angel, the* Sun *must cease publication at once. There appears to be nothing to save that situation. ... To the end, therefore, of starting the* Weekly Sun *as an independently owned paper sympathetic to the CCF, may I propose ... that the control shares in the* Sun *be sold to me for the sum of $1.00 (plus some of the obligations)?*

Plaunt agreed and on 6 June 1934, the *Weekly Sun* became Graham's once again. It quickly became the *New Commonwealth and Weekly Sun*, then the *New Commonwealth*, a purely CCF paper. In May 1935 Graham purchased the *Canadian Forum* for one dollar, as it, too, was about to go under. He moved it, the *New Commonwealth*, the LSR and the Ontario CCF to the Richmond Street offices. He also acquired a printing press and set up a company called Stafford Printers (after Sir Stafford Cripps, who made a contribution towards its purchase). The company printed the *New Commonwealth* and the *Forum*, and sought private printing contracts to generate revenue to support other activities.

On 2 May 1935 Graham wrote to King Gordon, who had just been fired from his job at the United Theological College in Montreal because of his involvement with the LSR and the CCF:

> *The* Forum *has now changed hands. This is the first letter written on the paper of my latest effort to control the means of production. ... our linotype is being moved into our new central offices, where will be located the heart of the revolution – provincial headquarters* [of the CCF], *Stafford Printers Limited,* New Commonwealth, *regional council, ... literature room etc. etc. ... First, there is no point in accepting the itinerant lectureship... Second, therefore, move east to Toronto and become editor of the* Forum. *Lee Kennedy will look after poetry, Grube book reviews, Underhill a political column, John Cripps London letters,* [Morden] *Lazarus and Margaret Sedgewick and myself general stuff to aid with detail. We can make a real paper of it I think.*
>
> *Third, accept Parkdale riding. ... There is real work to be done in Ontario. The west is going to look after itself... But we lack individuals here that fit in to all sections of Ontario. You are well known in Ontario and could be invaluable help.*

King declined Graham's offer, becoming instead national secretary for the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order.

The last piece of correspondence between Alan Plaunt and Graham concerning the *Sun* was a letter from Plaunt to Graham in November 1935. The promissory notes referred to were those signed by Graham to help keep the *Sun* afloat:

> *Enclosed please find the following: (1) Promissory note, dated Feb. 22, 1933, for $2,000.00 ... (2) Promissory note, date, Ottawa, July 3, 1933, for $650.00 ... (3) Second mortgage on Rockcliffe lot, for $2,000.00... I should be grateful if you would tear up the notes immediately, and consider the whole incident closed.*
>
> *With kindest regards and best wishes.*

*

There are no letters or diary notes describing the by-election in 1934 in Broadview-Riverdale (officially called Broadview but referred to by Graham as Riverdale). Graham was the CCF candidate, making him one of the first to run under the CCF banner. It was during the 1934 by-election that the CCF, because it could not afford to rent halls, began the practice of giving campaign speeches on street corners. The *Mail and*

Empire, on 22 September 1934, reported that "Mr. Spry, mounted on a truck, has held as many as a dozen street corner meetings in a single night." Graham lost to Tommy Church, the Conservative candidate, by what in later years he wryly described as "huge and enthusiastic majorities."

At this time the relationship between Graham and Irene Biss was becoming more serious. In the spring of 1935, she went west to collect material for a research project. Graham wrote letters of introduction for her to several friends. The following was to E.J. Tarr in Winnipeg:

> *A great friend of mine, Miss Irene Biss, is visiting Winnipeg for two or three weeks to study power in relation to industrial development. She is an assistant professor of economics at the university here, and a graduate of Cambridge and Bryn Mawr. … She wrote the power section of the report of the Royal Commission on economic development in Nova Scotia … and is one of the most competent economists here.*
>
> *She wishes to meet as many people* [as possible] *connected with power in the province. … Would it be too much to ask that you should ask her to call on you?*
>
> *My own affairs are progressing. When I left the Canadian Clubs my hope was that I should be able to secure independence to be a free agent in politics. After many struggles and failures, I am beginning to attain a modest measure of that independence. When I publicly associated myself with the CCF, my two colleagues on the* Sun *compelled me to make a choice between the two, I chose the CCF, and last June, Plaunt and Hume Blake withdrew from the* Sun*, stopped publishing, and I took over the company. We then began a new paper, using the* Sun *equipment and connections, under the name of the* New Commonwealth and Weekly Sun*. This paper, as a straight CCF paper, has paid its way since the third issue; we now have a substantial surplus, a solid circulation, and formed a company to purchase* [a] *printing plant. This plant is now publishing our paper, doing job work, and we have been able to increase the size of the paper to 16 pages. I have also taken over the* Canadian Forum *and propose to show that this paper also can be made to pay.*
>
> *In the CCF, I am chairman of the Ontario executive, and despite the frequent obituary notices, we are building a solid and fine organization, based upon a very fine type of individual. Two years ago, there was a borrowed desk in the corner of a borrowed office, today, we have 4,000 square feet on the ground floor and a staff of 20 people, our own printing plant, our own weekly paper, a sound budget, and 155 adult clubs and 40 youth clubs that desertions, defeat, and other kinds of discouragement have failed to shake. Our weakness in Ontario has been our leadership… We may not do very handsomely in the next general election… This combination of publishing and organization with a single objective admirably suits me and I am thoroughly happy.*

Graham wrote to Irene almost daily when she was away. The following are selections from letters written between 25 May and 27 August 1935. In particular, he refers to the 14 October general election campaign, in which he would run again for the CCF:

> *I have found difficulty in beginning this letter and thus beginning this series of letters which must, for the next three months, be the keystone of the Gothic arch. … We all went back to the Coes' after the sad farewell; I so failed to disguise my feelings that the Coes' could scarcely restrain their friendly jeers; and we all wondered if you kept up so well the impassiveness you framed in the doorway of the Pullman.*
>
> ***
>
> *Already in your brief absence, I grow in the realization of how much I leaned on you, and looked to you. I felt completely blank yesterday; I did not know what to do with myself or where to turn. I was lost; and today, the truly spring-like air and sky and sunshine seem wasted because they are not shared. … I have written the various letters I promised. For your information, they are as follows. Jack Richardson. … I hope he asks you to his home. His wife was once and briefly engaged to me. I think I told you the exciting story.*
>
> ***
>
> *Now I must turn to preparing some notes for the oration to my loyal constituents tonight. I do not feel a bit like making a speech and it is so difficult for me to arouse that fine flame of moral indignation which CCF audiences seem to expect from candidates, even of the dull school like myself. … I hope you are well into the power question, and that you do not feel your absence as I do.*
>
> ***
>
> *I received a check for $100 to start the* Forum*, which is no mean aid, and practically all the articles are in – but there are so many, many details in starting a paper on a new press, type, paper, forms, chases, and what not all to be fitted, adapted, bought or stolen so that the* Forum *will look the same though it comes from another greenhouse. … And now, alas, I must leave and make my silly speeches. … thoughts of you are warm, constant, and happy. I rush home for your letters, and was furious when the porter one night did not put my letters out and I had to wait until morning.*
>
> ***
>
> *The meeting last night was small, but I was in good form. I took the line "Who Owns Canada?" It shapes up in my mind more and more as the simplest, most direct and clear cut issue leading to socialist conclusions. It is so easy to handle, it puts the issue concretely, and it gives people both the hope of getting something and also some one group to hate –*

and with concentration so great, it looks easy to effect the change peacefully – after all, what are fifty men against the great Canadian people? … Now I must run along … and see if there is a letter for me at the college. Love to you, my dear, and thanks for your nourishing letters; I wait for them, and live on them.

***

Today has been a terrible rush – and I am tired. I went back to the college at noon, looking for letters; there were none, and I was even more weary; but the inveterably invisible porter appeared at the lodge; and there were two letters from you. I felt better and even the executive meeting – dealing with a quarrel between the Italians, the Jews and the ILP [Independent Labour Party] *– has not quite abashed me.*

***

I am still in the office. … Today has been spent on the paper, and now I am about to sit down and finish that speech on radio broadcasting. … In the first three weeks of the plant's operation, excluding only actual capital costs, we ran it with three men for about $450, and made a profit of $150… If this is our continued experience, it means that we will be able to run the paper at a profit, and run the press at a profit… Last night, when I left the office, I went home, read sonnet 12, re-read several of your letters, and from imagination or from something more, I had a most vivid sense of being with you.

***

I am about to leave for Niagara Falls via St. Catharines in a few minutes. … I really must go but I do want just to chat for a moment with you.

I am going to Windsor for the 12th, a women's meeting in Riverdale the 13th, and that same night off to Ottawa to visit the radio commission, then, off to Canton, New York for a quiet week at the conference of stuffed shirts … on Canadian-American relations. … I have many people to see about radio in Ottawa, would like a walk in the woods, and would like to see Betty and the gang there as well.

Now I really must go. Your letters are a nourishing resource; I look for them with eagerness and read them with joy. And I think of you dearly even during these days of inferno.

***

I am in an inherited – more accurately a confiscated – pair of magnificent silk pajamas, left in my apartment by Gladstone Murray of the BBC two years ago. … I am going now to read a while, then to read the sonnet – then to wait for you. I love you: if you knew how I depend upon your love.

***

I received two letters this morning when I was routed out of my room by the Rev. and the Prof. J. King Gordon. … This has been one of those morcellated days – necessary distractions from more necessary routine. First, King, then, Havelock and Parsons; then, the Hunger March, then, Ross about the Forum *and then and then… The printing plant is running night and day. Picnic programmes, pamphlets, tickets, an East York paper, the* Forum, *the* Commonwealth, *manifestos, and whatnot are keeping it running almost every hour.*

At the end of an imperfect day, I dearly feel the need of peace – and of you.

***

I arrived [in Ottawa] *in a blinding rain, visited a wedding party at Bobby McDougall's, then danced and then, at an early hour, went to Bob Inch's for bed. Saturday, the Camsell wedding, thence, to Kingsmere, and from there to dinner with a large crowd at the Golf Club. … this re-mingling with the aristocracy was agreeable.*

Today I rose about noon, had a swim [Graham stayed with the Smarts at Kingsmere] *… I have had your letters readdressed here, to the Rideau Club.*

I am much rested, and I needed rest badly. I was completely exhausted after so much running about before arriving here. … Betty asks of you and talks of you. … I wish you were here. … There is no air, no sunset, no sky like those of the Laurentian shield. I revive here at one glance and one breath. The sense of the north is the most refreshing and invigorating experience that one may have in Canada.

I enclose some blue-eyed grass. I picked these flowers, if you please, in the meadow owned by Mr. W.L.M. King; he was on his verandah.

This visit to Ottawa has shown me again and again how much I associate all my love with you and how all this beauty I see as something to share with you and to nourish us both. I send you all my love, all of it, and all of it again.

***

I have passed the entire day going more deeply into the radio situation. All my references have been checked, and final copies have been run off. … The more I go into radio, the more, however, it fascinates me.

I find the CCF *group rated very low in the press gallery; the group* [is] *not considered to be either aggressive or over-intelligent; and the* CCF *chances in the country are rated even lower than the group in the House. … I received your letter with the lilac today, and have read the letter thrice between writing and interviewing.*

The owner of this machine (Ottawa Journal) *has appeared and I must conclude.*

***

While wandering Sunday over the meadows of Mr. King I was stung by numerous Liberal black flies and mosquitos; my body is much like the surface of the moon, full of mountains and craters. And my eye looks as if it had been struck by a shell. I will arrive in Canton looking like a most sinister revolutionary.

***

It is midnight … for two days I have been arguing (& worse) listening. I must to bed. … My paper was not bad and the welcome was good. … F.H. Underhill, the MacKenzies, F.R. Scott & VWB [Vincent Bladen] *are here – & many other good friends.*

***

[Re] *Bertrand Russell's* Freedom and Organization. *I have read half of it, an extraordinarily superficial book, a bad book, from so good a man… In the evening I am dining with Walter Gordon and his wife.*

***

The trend of events grows more rapid and more exciting. Around our offices here, a definite campaign feeling has been in evidence all week, the city is beginning to reveal new campaign headquarters, campaign speeches are heard in parks and on street corners, our printing press is tearing out hundreds of thousands of very rude leaflets; there is rush and bustle, the fight is in the offing. … I had a wonderful meeting in Broadview with JSW [Woodsworth]*; 1,000 turned out on a hot night, and I made a speech that produced five minutes cheering. Then, we had a picnic – such a picnic – and there were 15,000 people at it. I spoke for half an hour to them. … Something has happened to my speaking; I do not think I am less reasoning, but certainly I am far more forceful and say things that reach the audiences more directly than before.*

Sunday, I … went out to Port Credit. For a whole day, I lay on the beach at Humphrey Carver's… Yesterday, after a hard day, I moved into Rosedale to spend the week with Walter Gordon – his family [is] *away.*

For a few days, I actually had a good stenographer – Patricia O'Connell, but she only lingered about a week, and is now out looking for a job with pay.

Our leaflets are ready. … We have 21 candidates nominated, with a whole group more to hear from. … If the four way ridings break evenly, I mean wisely, we may be the second strongest group in the House … and there might even be a situation in which no party would have an *over-all majority… At any rate, Stevens will somewhat weaken the Liberals, shatter the Tories, aid the CCF, and create that sort of confusion in which radical parties delight.*

Instead of being wobbly, or being directed by economic necessity, or being led into by-paths by such diversions as matrimony or money-grubbing, I have stuck to the political left-wing game all the way through. I grow a little angered when my well established friends tell me I should settle down. I have settled down; I am on a track, not in a rut, and no muddle puddles are going to mire me. You can be as rude as you like to anyone you meet in the west who says anything to the contrary.

***

Monday night I was in Riverdale, Tuesday in Riverdale, tonight again Riverdale. Last night I both canvassed store-keepers and spoke to an open air meeting. I thought the canvassing would be hard; last year, I got a very cold welcome among the store-keepers. But last night I was treated with the most pleasant friendliness, and received quite a number of assurances of support.

***

I have been in a terrible and delicious fight with friend Mitch. Hepburn. … the fight was to get 1,000 men back into the hostels against the express order of Mitch. For two days the CCF has fed, three times a day, more than 600 men. We have stirred Toronto to the core of its impenetrable being and today Mitch. Hepburn bit the dust. He capitulated fully and the men are going back tonight. I have to go and lead the parade in about ten minutes.

It has been almost a twenty four hour a day job, and has been grand fun. But the men were tragic; beaten, cowed, hungry – a pathetic and moving sight. They were like dumb animals. However, they are saved from the streets.

***

I have been fiendishly busy … and I am very very weary.

We are doing well. I am, however, still keeping 7-14 Sept. free of engagements, and I do hope we can meet somewhere and have a few days walking, swimming, resting.

Graham lost the election to Church. All fifty CCF candidates in Ontario lost, as did King Gordon in Victoria. Only seven CCF candidates won seats in the House of Commons. One was M.J. Coldwell, who would succeed J.S. Woodsworth as leader in 1942. Another was T.C. Douglas, who in 1944 would lead the first socialist government in North America.

In 1976 Graham described this exciting period:

> *For those of us intimately involved, there were a variety of opportunities, low plateaus from which we thought to hurl our little thunderbolts. We were busy around the clock, our evenings filled with speeches, our days with executive meetings and pamphlet writing. The people with whom I was most often associated, those who formed the League for Social Reconstruction, combined their university duties with public appearances, weekend ventures into the suspicious rural areas, conferences, councils, committees, sub-committees, interviews and, of course, interminable conversations. Sometimes we talked about a proposed coup, but more often we met to iron out some petty CCF club row which was almost always caused by deliberate Communist interference. Internal quarrels allegedly over issues of principle seemed usually to resolve themselves into personality conflicts.*

*

There was never much money, in spite of Graham's boasts to E.J. Tarr that his financial endeavours were doing well. The LSR paid Graham when it could, which was not very often, as did the *New Commonwealth*. Supporters in the Broadview riding did his laundry and would give him a new shirt or suit for Christmas or his birthday when it became apparent that those he owned were threadbare; others would hand him a few dollars on the street. Irene often fed him and it was her car that took Graham from meeting to meeting around the countryside. His rent was frequently in arrears and at times, Graham was reduced to selling a piece of his furniture. However, his situation was not unlike that of most people around him, and he loved what he was doing – what he described as "a ridiculous and delicious series of jobs and appointments, most of them unsalaried and most of them held simultaneously [which] contributed to that full sense of living and commitment."

In November 1935 Graham went to Ottawa where he attended a Canadian Institute of International Affairs dinner at which J.W. Dafoe was guest speaker. At the Rideau Club he met with Ken Greene, Russel Smart, Brooke Claxton and Ernest Lapointe, all of whom he found most cordial. He wrote to Irene:

> *How I love Ottawa. I would rather live here than anywhere else in the world. The river, the mountains, the colours, the people, the politics, the sense of ease, comfort, and gentle, significant, almost hidden activity satisfy me. I wish I were here, in any capacity, and had you and a home. Ken Greene has moved into a charming new house, and really I envied him. I honestly admit that I loathe the too hectic, and somewhat uncomfortable existence of a radical bachelor and agitator in Toronto. We must do better than merely be two radicals. There must be more than that. I like the agitation and the radicalism but there should be some adequate and secure contrast.*

1936-1937

Russia; Bethune; unemployable in Canada; job hunting in New York.

> *I went to him* [Joe Atkinson of the *Toronto Star*] *and said "couldn't you find me a job on your newspaper" … And he said "No Graham – you're finished in Canada. Your only alternative is to leave the country." He said "you're labeled now, you haven't a chance of getting satisfactory employment." Well, this turned out to be the case. It was very cutting advice, hard to take. (Spry Recollections)*

In May 1936 Graham left on a six-week trip to Russia. Just before his departure he received the following letter from his old friend and mentor, J.W. Dafoe:

> *Of all the letters I received on the occasion of my seventieth birthday none pleased me more than yours. I am glad to think that young men who in their pursuit of political and social good take a road different from that along which I still trudge my way, realize that while the means may be different, our objectives are the same. Indeed the great division in society, which is every day becoming more plainly marked, is on the principle of democratic versus authoritarian government. You are in the Libertarian camp with me and I trust that the same thing can be said of most of your young associates. If we can keep the democratic form of government with its accompaniments of free speech and free association the evolution of society that will result will, of course, be accepted – even though it may not be acceptable – by believers in Liberal individualism. I am myself profoundly convinced that in a free society the principles of Liberalism will steadily justify themselves until in the procession of the decades – perhaps of the centuries – they will become universal. But this is an expression of faith – I have no expectation that in the span of life that remains to me there will be any clarification of the immense confusion in which the world now wallows; in fact the chances are that it will be increased.*
>
> *Meanwhile here in Canada I think the contribution to political discussion which you and your group are making is very valuable – particularly in view of the almost complete disappearance, for the time being at least, of the Conservative party as an intellectual factor, though no doubt it still represents a great voting strength. The development of*

> *political organizations and political programmes in Canadian politics during the next ten years will be most interesting – and I hope to be able to watch them, though necessarily my personal contribution must hereafter be a lessening one.*

The trip to Russia was sponsored by Professor Urwick of the University of Toronto, "an Englishman from an industrial family with means." He wanted to know how the Russian experiment with communism was reconciling democracy with centralized planning, and he knew that Graham was exhausted and needed a holiday. He gave Graham $500 on condition that he go to Europe, rest a bit in Britain visiting friends, and then carry on to Russia to report on its development as a Communist society.

Graham's visit to England was a round of socializing: dinner with the Pearsons (Pearson had recently been posted by the Department of External Affairs to London), Jane Smart, and Gladstone Murray, of the BBC; a sherry party given for Oxford Canadians by the Masseys, and so on. He also met with Sydney Webb, a leading member of the Fabian Society, who provided letters of introduction to people in Moscow. Before leaving Toronto Graham had contracted to write ten articles for the *Toronto Star* and when in England he received a telegram from Southam Press asking for twelve articles at $15 apiece. Business concerns followed him for the first part of his journey, as he wrote to Irene:

> *Aboard the* Empress, *I got a cable from Havelock and Grube asking unconditional granting of power of attorney and sale for $1.00 of my control* [of the *Forum*] *to the LSR. I do not want the* Forum *for myself but I do want to know its future, and I declined to surrender in darkness. But knowing cash was needed, I have "embezzled" $150 of my tour grant & sent it to the* Forum *… provided the paper was continued and the status quo maintained. The money I make from articles will recoup these borrowed dollars. …The* Forum, *I feel, must go on as it has – as an independent socialist paper. It would be disastrous if it were turned over … to the LSR without an assurance from the LSR that it would maintain it – but between you and I, I confess I think of the day when you and I may edit it ourselves.*

From England, Graham boarded a Russian ship, the *Co-operazia*, which took him through the Baltic Sea to Leningrad. Shortly after boarding ship he wrote to Irene, describing the other passengers and adding:

> *But these beautiful strangers are at least less embarrassing and less of a responsibility than one other lady who insisted she was going to come. I refer, if you please, to Jane Smart, whom I have only seen twice and always with others – but she announced she was coming. I rebuffed her firmly and told Mike Pearson to use his influence. Yesterday, I heard at Intourist she was coming – but enquiry today elicits the information … that her visa was not granted.*

From Moscow, on 21 May 1936, Graham wrote to Anne and Alec Macdonald, Irene's sister and brother-in-law, whom he had met in London:

> *It is too soon to be very bold in impressions of the Soviet Union, but certainly, the stories of lack of food, of clothes and necessities are ridiculous... The people, too, are amazingly lively, and the various social services, protecting the entire family from every hazard, illness, old age, accident, crop failures, or unemployment, have quite removed all fear, all feeling of insecurity. ... The propaganda for race equality is apparent everywhere, even in children's nurseries (birth to 3 years) where wall-papers and illustrations of children invariably show whites, blacks and almond eyes. The papers are full of race equality propaganda, so are the motion pictures... The significance of this may well be to give the Soviets the leadership of the continental yellow races, and to awaken altogether new aspirations throughout the empires of European powers. The Soviet brings many yellow and black Communists or sympathizers to Moscow and to other centres, and these people become agents all over the world, not officially, of course, but none the less really. This racial equality propaganda is now largely confined to the Soviet territories, but in a few years, when the Union is the most powerful country in the world, and when other countries are exhausted by unemployment or war, then, the drive will begin. This, of course, is sheer hypothesis, and by drive, the last thing I mean is aggression.*

Ten days later Graham wrote to J.S. Woodsworth:

> *First, and foremost, I am struck with the sense of security and hope that prevails everywhere. I speak here primarily of economic security. The Soviet people take this for granted, now, but it strikes a visitor most vividly. All the hazards in the life of man or woman are provided for to the utmost within the present resources of the country. There is no unemployment. ... The result is that the people have no fear of the future, no fear, except, of course, the fear that a war will destroy their new society. ... The second impression, of course, is the productiveness of this country and this people and the undoubted and quite rapid rise in the standard of living. ... The contrast between the universal activity in construction here and the relative stagnation in Canada is too obvious to need statistical proof... But more important than either economic security or increased wealth is the spirit of the people, their faith in themselves collectively and individually, the deep-seated belief they have in the significance of what they are doing, however menial... There is more than an economic revolution at work, here, there is a moral revolution... The picture, of course, is not without its dark spots. Judged statically rather than dynamically, it is, in many respects, a dreary picture; housing is appallingy scarce and quite bad, the supply of clothing is still inadequate... there is a vast and magnificent inefficiency in the most simple matters of administration and work; and for those who*

> *attack the structure of society the quick and final sanction of force. … it fears war and devotes one fifth of its budget to defence, but as an English architect put it, the Soviet Union is doing the right things badly, we in England are doing the wrong things well. … Let me assure you, my trip has not altered my belief that the CCF approach is the only practicable approach to creating a new society in Canada.*

To Irene, at about the same time, Graham sent the following letter:

> *Not one letter that I have posted in Moscow has reached its destination, and I was laughed at by people I have met here for thinking that they would be. This is but an example of the small things that slip badly here… Jane Smart did turn up. … I take no responsibility for her appearance whatsoever, and she left London telling everyone she was going to the country. … I know you will rationally understand, but pardonably you may be irrationally enangered. … Next time, you had better come with me and protect me from all these ladies.*

On 6 June Graham was in Stockholm and "revelled for a while in the soft, gentle rhythm of a kindly capitalist society." To Irene he sent two letters, written two days apart:

> *It took the whole morning establishing a first contact and getting settled here, in the apartment of an engineer whom I met in Moscow and who said, take my apartment while you are there. … At long last, I found all* [Irene's letters], *at Cook's here – the CPR agent. Oh, what a joy it was to get them. I had walked slowly through these splendid streets, seeing in the shops so many things that I thought would look so well on our table, or clothes (nice silks for all purposes) that would look so well on you, and I wanted you so much to be here and to be enjoying the new impressions, and the sun, and the grace and charm of the Swedish people. When I found your letters I most carefully and slowly arranged them in order, then found a quiet bench, near the harbor and near the royal palace, and there, with a fountain tinkling a few feet away I revelled in news of you.*

***

> *Stockholm has been charming, interesting, but enervating. … Essentially, I think the difference is due to the difference in the atmosphere, the societies; Moscow was the heart of a society bursting with fresh blood and fertility, an aggressive, youthful society with an objective in which it believed; but here is an old society, genial, kindly, intelligent, but defensive and of its objective, doubtful.*

Graham also wrote to Betty Smart from Stockholm:

> *You will have heard that Miss Jane Smart, your sister, followed me, an elderly and not too reputable bachelor, to Russia. For this I take no responsibility; on the contrary, I did all I could to dissuade and even prevent such a voyage, Mike Pearson and all the powers of a self-*

> *governing dominion equal in status and in no way subordinate, were invoked, but to what avail? Of course, I was delighted that Jane did, in due course, appear in Moscow, but I almost feel that it may be dangerous to return to Canada; if it is not your mother who wields a shot-gun, will it be Irene? And if it is neither, will it be my too, too unctuous constituents? Alas, these Smarts, what can be done about them? The eldest ignored me, the second dismissed me, and the youngest treats me as a chaperone.*

*

During the summer of 1936 Graham suggested to the CCF that it attempt to raise money to send a hospital to Spain. His motive was to counter the publicity garnered by the Communists in urging Canadians to fight against fascism in the Spanish Civil War. Nothing had been collected when he printed a headline story in the *New Commonwealth* announcing the plan. As he said, it was only the announcement of a plan, not the announcement of an achievement. However, his story had the desired result:

> *To my delight and alarm, Dr. Norman Bethune responded almost immediately. I was delighted that a man of his eminence should wish to be involved and alarmed because the Spanish Hospital and Medical Aid Committee was a figment of my imagination designed to stir interest in the Republic, with only a dim hope that it might eventually become a reality. When Bethune arrived in Toronto, I had to confess that there was neither an organization nor the money to send him to Spain.*
>
> *We immediately set to work to make the Committee more than imagination. ... eventually we set up a Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy. ... The immediate problem was finding a way to pay for Bethune's trip to Spain. I remembered that Jane Smart, the girl who had followed me to Russia, still had not cashed in the return portion of her steamship ticket to Europe, after her decision to remain in Toronto for the winter. I rushed over to her flat early in the morning, and a bleary-eyed Jane staggered to the door. I blurted out my request, hoping that the terms were as persuasive as possible. She shut the door in my face, only to reappear moments later with the steamship ticket in hand. As I was reiterating my thanks, she closed the door again, and, presumably, returned to bed. I'm not sure that she said anything during the entire time.*
>
> *Bethune left Canada from Quebec City, where he boarded the ship with an enormous quantity of medical supplies.*
>
> *He* [Bethune] *was a problem child as it turned out. We didn't know this... He belonged to a family in which there were three Anglican bishops and while he was known to be a very keen leftist, the friends I had who were also his friends were anything but communists – like Frank Scott and other doctors and Brooke Claxton. He was a McGill figure. I*

> *certainly didn't get to know him, but he was very highly political. He never mentioned to me that he was a communist.*

In December 1936 Graham wrote to David Lewis – who was now working in Ottawa for the CCF on a voluntary basis while completing his law studies – expressing his concerns:

> *Our election results were extremely bad, in comparison with the Communists. The Communists used a right wing appeal... The situation now is that the Communists are powerful in the unions...* [They] *are using this power for one or other of two purposes – to force the CCF into a united front, or to weaken or smash the CCF. ... We have only two courses of action; one, to ignore the whole proposal, or to fight the Communist party, explaining its purposes, or attacking it emphatically. ... I would like your opinion and Coldwell's if he is still available.*
>
> *I come more and more to the conclusion that our form of organization in the present CCF is altogether unsuited for the present day world. It is too loose, too easily captured, and is out of touch with the people. ... I cannot exaggerate the drive that is going on, and that is undermining us in so many places.*

Graham wrote to Frank Scott in a similar vein:

> *I am writing to ascertain if King Gordon is in Montreal, and if he is there permanently. The reason of my enquiry is this – it is impossible for me here to carry on as I have in the past, working either with part-time people ... or with people ... who have so much routine that they cannot do the necessary organization and planning.*
>
> *In a word, we have got to have more effective personnel and more of it. ... two of the assistants that have been here, two of the best, Morden Lazarus on the business side and B.C. King on the editorial side have had to leave and take jobs that paid a living wage. ... I am coming to several definite decisions, some only concerning me personally, others concerning our organization and policy. Concerning myself, I have almost come to the decision that it is impossible for me to continue any longer in the CCF unless I get more assistance in the job, and more of a living wage. I am pestered and bothered every day by the financial problem and it is no longer a question of enduring the endurable, it is simply a question of keeping going; and at present remuneration, I cannot keep going. In order to get a little assistance, I now have a stenographer, I am paying her three of my ten dollars a week; and have to pay all my transportation costs out of that. In consequence, clothes, dentist, insurance, rent, debts, simply go by the board. ... As to organization and policy ... we must have more intelligent, energetic and full-time assistance for Ontario wide activities. ... What is King doing? How is he financed? Where is he? and could he come here at least for a few months?*

In April 1937 Graham again wrote to Lewis, who was by then national secretary of the CCF:

> *I have been out in the smaller centres west of here – Galt, Guelph, Brantford, Georgetown and so on. I cannot over-emphasize our opportunity and our weakness in relation to that opportunity. Everywhere there is the demand for union organizers, everywhere there is the cry – labor party – everywhere there is a new attitude, a new public opinion, and everywhere the CCF is almost totally ineffective. … Even farm sentiment is changing, I think. I made a practice of picking up people along the highways and everyone was solidly against Hepburn. … But personally, it looks as if inevitably I would have to drop out. I simply cannot carry on any longer; every cent I manage to scrape up goes into the CCF – for the radio, the* New Comm., *the Stafford Printers, – and I am up against it. I am even under notice to vacate my rooms, because of rent arrears. Margaret Sedgewick feels as I do – as long as we are ready to go on like this, nothing will be done to correct the situation. I have told and told the executive my situation, but nothing is proposed or done, for me – always for someone else. So I am going to leave the CCF and earn a living – at what…, goodness knows. This decision makes me ill – physically ill; for me, it is not dropping a hobby, it is dropping the sort of life I have always wanted; and my part-time colleagues will sit back and take my departure for granted, as if it really did not matter. I have been explaining and explaining the situation for months; and nothing is done. Now, I have no choice; and have to get out just at the time when our greatest opportunity has come.*
>
> *In any event, I will carry on until after the annual convention, and will see you here then.*

The following letter is in draft form only, so it may never have been sent. It is dated 10 May 1937, and addressed to John Mitchell, president of the Ontario CCF:

> *From time to time during the past two or three years I have made known to the council how difficult was my financial position and in the past few months to both the council and executive I have repeatedly, if informally, indicated how difficult that position remained. … No such improvement has taken place, nor is there any immediate prospect of such improvement, I am compelled therefore to inform you that I will, at the conclusion of the annual convention of the Ontario section withdraw from all full-time activity in the CCF and that I will not stand for any office in the CCF at the annual convention.*
>
> *This decision is not taken suddenly or recently… I do not wish to leave the CCF. … It is not easy to leave work that has commanded all one's energies and all one's loyalties. … Perhaps, and here I hope against hope, the fact that the individual who has borne no mean portion of the responsibility in the last four years, who has polled the best in any Toronto constituency, who has initiated as many if not more CCF activities than any other is compelled to resign by failure of the CCF to maintain him may awaken the membership to an awareness of the need*

> *for vigorous action and for personal sacrifices. I sincerely hope so, and if the situation changes, I wish to remain free to withdraw this resignation. ... I will seek, first, remunerative work which leaves me free to remain in the CCF; only if this is impossible, will I then have to accept whatever work I can, and thereby be forced to resign from all association with the CCF.*

The Ontario CCF convention was held at the end of May and, contrary to what was stated in the letter to John Mitchell, Graham sought re-election as vice-president. He was opposed and lost to a woman named Lorna Cotton. Cotton told David Lewis that she had decided to oppose Graham because his vacillating policy had caused the movement embarrassment, his judgement of people was poor, he was too much of an individualist, and he did not consult the executive and at times had gone contrary to its advice. "Graham has ability," she concluded, "but he has no self-discipline. He constantly complains of having too much to do yet he rarely sticks to a job."

A few days after the convention, on 29 May, David Lewis wrote to Graham. It was a very long letter of which these are excerpts:

> *I have been thinking a great deal about the occurrence last Monday and, although I still feel very strongly that in running against you Lorna did not play the game, certain inescapable conclusions have forced themselves upon me.*
>
> *(1) Lorna did not run against you because she personally wanted to be vice-president but rather because she believed, rightly or wrongly, that you were using the vice-presidency to usurp effective leadership from John.*
>
> *(2) This belief is held not only by Lorna but also by most others in and around the office.*
>
> *(3) Rightly or wrongly, you have given most people the impression that you want to run the show yourself and are not prepared to cooperate or consult sufficiently with the rest of the group.*
>
> *(4) The vote on Monday showed, and it is your duty to face the fact and analyse its causes, that although you have won respect for your devotion you have not won people's confidence to the same extent.*
>
> *(5) No one with whom I spoke questioned your services and usefulness to the movement. They were, however, critical of the way you have done things so far.*
>
> *(6) I am forced to the conclusion that this situation cannot be entirely the fault of the other people but must in large measure be also your fault, for I am convinced that whatever limitations men like Herb. Orloff and John Mitchell may have, they are most willing to cooperate if the same willingness is shown by the other side.*

> *(7) The matter can still be adjusted amicably and with good results to the movement, but successful adjustment is dependent as much on you as on anybody else.*
>
> *I am anxious that you understand that it was not only my friendship to you which prompted me to take the attitude I took last Monday. It was also, and more, my conviction that in the present set-up of the Ontario leadership you are indispensible because you are almost the only one with the necessary political imagination to relate the* CCF *to the day-to-day events as they unfold. For this reason I believe it is imperative that you stay with the movement and continue to hold a position of authority. … What is the formula for the desired adjustment of the present difficulties? In words the answer may be put simply as follows: (1) that you recognize and help build John as the leader of the Ontario movement and that you be given an undisputed place in the second line of leadership; (2) that you determine in the future to cooperate and consult fully with John in particular and with everyone else available before you speak or act on behalf of the movement in any important matter.*
>
> *You will continue to be the one to produce most of the ideas but they must be considered and acted upon cooperatively. If I may say so, you suffer from the thing that all people with strong imaginations suffer. You give birth to an unending stream of ideas, all of which necessarily catch your fancy with almost equal force, but they are not all necessarily good. They should be subjected to scrutiny and analysis by others. Full cooperation with the executive would produce the result. It would also have the added tremendous advantage that you would be relieved from the many small jobs which take so much of your time and energy. … I felt it my duty to write you this letter, both as a friend and as a fellow-socialist. I hope that you will determine to stay with the movement, for you are, and I mean it, indispensable. I hope, also, that you will consider what I have said as objectively as possible. There may be, I have a strong feeling that there is, something in it. Write me as frankly your views on the subject. I am looking forward to many years of cooperation with you in our movement.*
>
> *My kindest personal regards and congratulations for this week's issue of the* New Commonwealth. *Sophie sends you her greetings.*

Graham replied to Lewis on 31 May. These, too, are excerpts from a long letter:

> *I have just read and re-read your letter. I appreciate it thoroughly, and from every point of view, the movement, which is first, and, as well, personally. I agree with a great deal of what you say, and have heard of course much of it from not a few people before, and, of course, regard most of it as valid. I wonder, however, if some of the basis of criticism of my activities would not dissolve a little if analysed, and if the*

circumstances under which I am compelled to work do not distribute the blame more widely.

First, as to consultation. I have explained that in issues that require prompt decision – decision within a matter of half an hour – I have had only two people to turn to in the office, Herb. and Spencer. Spencer, while he was in the office up to the new year, was here usually only in the afternoon. Most critical situations arise out of newspaper reports in the morning or noon editions, or from calls by newspapers. Spencer as a general rule was not available. And frequently, very frequently, Herb. was at the courts or elsewhere. Time and again that has been the situation. Time and again I have telephoned Ted. Jolliffe. Time and again, he was out. In a word, time and again, I had either to assume the responsibility or let the opportunity pass. Time and again I did let the opportunity pass. I have asked for examples of my "failure to co-operate." Strangely, enough no one can cite any example. … However, facts do not matter in politics and personalities – the impression is what counts. I challenge the accuracy of the impression, though ready to be shown examples of erring, but the reality is the impression exists and must have been created. Certainly, I have at times rushed things e.g. setting up an unemployment council (after seven months consideration by the council) when Rogers announced relief cuts. Certainly, I have sometimes over-ridden objections or calls for delay. I believe that will continue to be necessary whoever is in the office because circumstances will compel such action, such immediate action.

Second – I simply cannot ascribe any nobility to Lorna's intentions. For three years, she has hounded people out of office, Lebourdais by starting the story he was a Mounted Police spy, Arthur Williams by constant nagging, and so on and so on. … On the game she is playing, John Mitchell and I are in absolute accord – she is working with Garland either to displace Mitchell by Garland, or by herself. I think the first is the most likely. … Two years ago, Teskey and Cotton tried to oust me from the Commonwealth, *and Teskey sounded out Morden Lazarus, assuring him that he "would be looked after." Prior to that – the Riverdale by-election – Lorna Cotton and three others on the council opposed my candidature and Lorna was responsible for bringing back Philpott* [who a few months earlier had betrayed the movement] *and having him nominated. And prior still to that Lorna, contrary to a mild promise, helped to persuade the Riverdale people not to nominate me for the provincial elections. … The present situation is not new, it is but a reflection of a long series of incidents. … I am, of course, more than ready to take all my share of the blame, admit all sorts of personal defects, and take the brunt of any responsibility that may be mine. But the fact is that I have borne the burden and the fray, have done most of what has been done, have given what leadership I have been permitted to give, and have done so almost without help, personal, or official. I am criticised for starting things – and not carrying them on – precisely. I*

> *start them, but their continuance depends upon other people co-operating. Have they backed me up? My answer is almost inevitable – it is almost always, no.*
>
> *However, the future is what counts. John Mitchell has never had anything less than my support, and will continue to receive it, though I am convinced that not all the publicity we can give him will make him, or indeed anyone else we have, the leader we need. If he comes to Toronto, he will get, as he always has got, priority. … The same goes for Herb Orloff; he will get full co-operation. As for myself, I ask the same consideration other people get; the co-operation of my friends in making my work known (it really is not, definitely not) and absolutely no diminution of my influence or authority in the movement. Such "demotion" was the evident and organized desire of some in the convention and the council. I will not tolerate it. I am not speaking of the public: I can get more publicity than anyone else, that is not my concern – my concern is my position in the movement. I can do all I can, but not alone. I am ready to take any bumps there may be – but I want some of the support that I am entitled to and have not got.*
>
> *At the moment, I am not sure what I should do, and will continue thinking till my two weeks are up; the two weeks before I make a decision. On every personal consideration, I would be wise in trying to restore my finances. They are parlous. I owe considerable sums of money: my insurance is gone, my one asset – a Rockcliffe lot, is mortgeged and the taxes are in arrears. I have little or no confidence in the adequacy or regularity of the new effort to finance me. It will start well, peter out as all other efforts have, and I will be left holding the bag as usual. Indeed, not even the start is well – exactly 12 days ago I was promised a cheque in order that I might deal with my rent and my bank. Not a word nor a cheque. There can be no doubt that on personal grounds I would be wise in looking for a good job for a year or so, even if "good" requires going to New York or elsewhere, an "ill" I would like to avoid, but which may not be possible. For if I do step out, I will step out with a deep-seated, if temporary, profit motive. … Thanks again for your letter. I thoroughly appreciate it, David, thoroughly and hope that you will write as many as may be necessary.*

Graham quit the CCF, the *New Commonwealth*, the LSR, the *Forum* and Stafford Printers. He received several letters expressing gratitude for what he had done to build the CCF, including one from Eugene Forsey:

> *I need hardly say that I feel the CCF has suffered an incalculable loss. … You had nearly worn yourself out in the service of the party and had got, I fear, more kicks than ha'pence. When that unspeakable woman was elected to your place, it was the last straw. Of course one doesn't go into work of this sort expecting gratitude; that would be foolish. But a little appreciation is pleasant, never the less; indeed, in the long run, essential. One expects that, and reasonable co-operation, from one's*

> *friends at least. I regret bitterly that you got so little of either from me. Appreciation I felt, always, and increasingly. But I took it for granted you would know I felt it, and so kept silent for the most part. … I hope you saw the "birthday" issue of the* New Commonwealth. *They left out … part of one of my remarks. It read originally: "Without Graham Spry, our movement would have had no Stafford Printers, no* New Commonwealth, *no* Canadian Forum." *I drum that into people every chance I get.*

Graham's job hunt began in Canada in June 1937. He soon learned that his CCF connections would make it very difficult to find work. A friend, Joe Atkinson, owner and publisher of the *Toronto Star,* told Graham he was finished in Canada and that he had no choice but to leave the country if he wanted to find work; J.W. Dafoe agreed. Graham went to Ottawa to collect letters of reference and introductions to people in broadcasting and publishing in New York. His job search can be followed through his letters to Irene. She was in Toronto in June, then joined Graham in New York for a few days before sailing to England for the summer to visit with her family. On her return at the end of September, Graham met her in Quebec; they had a short holiday together and returned to Toronto. In the fall Irene was back at the University of Toronto and Graham travelled between Toronto and New York. The first letter, to Irene, was written in Ottawa on 10 June 1937:

> *I am vigorously seeking contacts in New York and have several excellent introductions in view, including one immediate offer that may mean something in the future, but I hesitate to be sure of it. Mr. Dafoe, whom I saw again, will, I hope, get me a letter to Walter Lippman. The advice I get generally is to go to New York for a while until I become mildly respectable again!*
>
> *But really, it is humiliating having to look for work, especially work outside Canada. I have not enjoyed this day. … My love for Ottawa has not dimmed. The surroundings are so quiet and so beautiful. … Wouldn't you like to live here? It is such a rest, and such a joy after the hurly burly of Toronto.*
>
> ***
>
> *Last night, I really regretted being out of active politics – Darcy McGee (one of Betty's bfs) was at dinner with Helen and Mrs. S. H.* [Helen] *and D.* [Darcy] *started on local gossip. It really angered me, so angered me that I protested several times, backed by Russel senior. These are the people who have the opportunities, the education, the money – and they waste themselves and their substance on silly sex intrigues, petty rivalries, and repeated trivial amusements. I like amusement, but as a recreation not as a life. These people live amusement, and their tale is a tale of illicit amours, divorces, fights, illnesses, waste. Give me my Riverdale people.*

***

I have no yearning for New York. It has a certain new appeal that may be interesting, but the noise, friendlessness, and un-freedom appal me. However, that must be gone through. … I have been lucky in finding key people and seeing them quickly. I saw Brophy at NBC yesterday and Walter Lippman at the Herald-Tribune *today. And last night I heard a survey of the field from Steve Cartwright. I am not too hopeful. In the newspaper field, at least, there is vast competition and over-crowding. … Brophy was friendly enough in NBC but not too encouraging; and he passed me on to another man who is, unhappily, away on holiday till the end of the month. … But it is radio I will get into, and somewhere in these huge organizations, there must be a toehold for me. … New York is stimulating; it is an acid, it will bite, corrode, or polish. A great spectacle, and one I want to see more of. And dearly would I like to work on the 67th story of radio city.*

***

Would you wire me here what train and what station? … I had no luck in seeing people to-day, but acquired a few more "leads" in the publishing field.

***

I was quite overwhelmed to get two letters from you the morning after you sailed… Bliven sent me two letters and has written the editor of Fortune. *I hope to call on him tomorrow, at least, to make an appointment. I am also going to write to Owen D. Young and the head of Columbia, Paley, as Merrill Denison advised.*

***

I am face to face with a job, and what a job. It may, of course, blow over, there is no decision yet, but all the trends are in my direction; I am exactly what they are looking for, and they must act quickly. The salary is undetermined – it will be $100 a week or $150 a week to start with, according to first suggestions… In addition, an almost unlimited travelling and entertainment allowance will be paid; and … almost all the work will be, if you please, in Toronto and Ottawa with trips across Canada… It is the public relations job of advising the World Fair, New York, 1939 on what to do about Canada, and in particular to get the federal and some of the provincial governments to participate… Tomorrow, I meet the last hurdle – Admiral Standley, retired, who is in charge of the foreign participation. … Biographical details with violent emphasis on the military history of all the Sprys has gone forward to the admiral… I am also having an interview with one of the editors of Fortune *to-morrow.*

***

I was to see the Admiral, today. I did not and the word when I appeared at 10 a.m. was apparently final – "no expansion in Canada"… Fortune *– another delay. The third – editor, too busy. Call next week. So it goes.*

Tomorrow, it is the Modern Age Publishers. No word from radio.

It takes almost a whole day to make two real contacts and how it costs: half a dozen bus rides, two or three phone calls, meals and more than $2 or $3.00 is broken!

***

I have no particular news; I call on offices, write a bit at the typewriter; see a few people; and so the days pass.

I am sure I can make money. The toe in the door is the difficulty. I think we ought to launch a five year plan of social security for the Sprys Inc. You come down here next spring, finish your opus, and take a large and expensive teaching job at Columbia, or some out-of-town but nearby institution of learning, make your millions while I make mine, and when we have enough to give us an income, modest but adequate for the care and education of the infants, we will return to politics, revolution and the salvation of the Canadian people.

***

I was hoping for a letter earlier (and needed it) but the day you reached Plymouth, the fast boats such as the Queen Mary *sailed from Southampton; likewise the German boats such as the* Deutschland *and the French such as the* Normandie. *But from now on, there will be, I hope, a steady stream of letters, though actually the number of fast boats to and fro is not numerous or well dispersed; they seem all to leave and arrive in a bunch without any consideration for those who want their letters equitably distributed. … Monday, I am lunching with R.L. Buell of the For. Pol. Assoc. He is considering a book along the lines of* Social Planning *and I might fit in there. … But it is evident that getting settled is going to be a matter of several weeks, perhaps, of several months. … The question of financing may grow acute before that time, but somehow it can be managed. … Speaking of letters, I have not had one single, solitary line from anyone in Canada except a tiny note from Betty S., and a note from Jack Risk… I have written to nearly all the CCF, LSR gang, and to those in Montreal, to CBC and to others, but not a word. Only the United Front for Spain has constantly kept in touch with me, and that because I can help here. But really the silence of the old gang appals me, and outrages me.*

***

Yesterday also I had a long interview with Dr. Franklin Dunham, director of radio education in the NBC, an Irish Catholic, Tammany, Harvard, genial, friendly, and I have no doubt, a consummate bluffer.

... The conversation with Dunham quickly revealed that his department was sheer bluff... Radio here begins and ends with advertising revenues and advertising purposes. All else is either bunk or sugar coating. There is nothing in the NBC educational department for me or anyone else... My next approach in NBC is to the script department and in the next few days I am meeting some of the Columbia people. ... And the weekend? It was diverting, exciting, and real. [Rathbone], *a Nova Scotian, asked me to spend the weekend with him at Baldwin, near Freeport. I accepted with joy. ... Rathbone's house is a simple, frame summer cottage, too reminiscent of those faded rows along the Burlington beach, but out its windows there are the canals and inlets where the tide rises and falls, where the pleasure boats and the fishing boats chug and splutter, and where the great stretches of shore send to the air the acrid taste and smell of sea-weed. ... This letter is to go by way of the* Deutschland*; politics are no bar to the quickest contact with you.*

***

I have just been formulating an expedient to resort to here if all else fails. I am going to try and combine, with the weekly news broadcasts for the CBC the idea of becoming the commercial representative in NYC. I have written Murray twice in the last two weeks but he appears still to be away on holiday. ... I am reading Lawrence's Seven Pillars of Wisdom. *What a delicious style, but what a portentious fellow. Even genius should not pretend to genius, let alone importance. ... Shakespeare, by the way, is the leading dramatist in New York. On an ordinary royalty basis of 10 percent he would have made half a million in New York last season, and is headed for wealth again this.*

Today, I am calling on some advertising agencies and writing a few articles.

***

I have reached a stalemate here... [17 August 1937] *My plan now is to leave here next weekend, probably Thursday, pass through Toronto and thence to Ottawa and return here when an income is in sight. ... I wrote Murray three times in three weeks about the work; but not a word has come from him; there is nothing else for it but to head back, camp on his doorstep, and clinch the job somehow. ... Believe me, it will take a pretty noble cause to induce me to endure the deep seated worry that my situation involves. My watchword now is security; liberty, equality and fraternity for others is in the ice-box for the time being.*

***

There have been two developments since I wrote yesterday ... and I may not go to Ottawa tomorrow ... one, a wire from Murray that he will be in New York Thursday; and, two, an accidental contact with an old Oxford friend [Earl Theonen of California Standard Oil], *servant of one of the world's largest corporations ... has offered me a fabulous job...*

Wires and reports are now rushing about the continent, and I am to be interviewed perhaps in a day or so, perhaps in a fortnight.

***

I had lunch yesterday with the vice-president (I ate swordfish and drank beer with the great man) and we got along famously, so far as I could see. ... Murray, Frigon and Weir were here yesterday, also, on some great confab with the NBC. I had two hours with Murray and spent the evening with Weir. Murray agreed at once to (a) the series of national broadcasts from here on American politics. (b) and to my appointment as American representative of the CBC... My job will be threefold (a) I will be a broadcaster ... (b) a representative to act for the CBC in any capacity (c) and I will also, on a commission basis and retainer, seek to get American programmes to buy time on the Canadian network.

I will not do very much in terms of salary to start with. ... The days of indefiniteness are, almost, I think, at an end... There may still be hitches; until the first pay check is in the bank, I will have no confidence in any plan.

***

Today I am leaving for Montreal and Ottawa... I had a further chat with Weir... and there are some difficulties in the way which Murray did not tell me of; in consequence, I may have to linger longer than I expected.

***

[From Ottawa] *I have not seen Murray here; but after various conversations, my own feeling, which rapidly crystallized after the over cheerful letter I wrote after seeing Murray in New York, is that on no account and for no consideration will I concur in Murray's suggestion that I make my peace with the government. ... it is asking too much of human pride to ask me to make peace. I am ready to retire from the field of battle, a casualty, but not to make terms. ... I think I would rather leave Canada, perhaps permanently, than "make my peace," as it is apparently required even for the most innocent participation in the work of the CBC. ... Never have I had such a livid, passionate yearning to get settled into something definite and something absorbing, systematic, and certain... In this period of doubt and confusion, how trying I hope I will never quite admit to anyone, your letters have been certainties; anchors and lighthouses both.*

***

Odette Lapointe is being married on September 25th in Quebec... I received the invitation – such an elegant invitation in French. I think we should get married in French.

***

> *I will meet you at Quebec on the 23rd* [September]... *I have had no further word from New York... If I hear nothing within a week from New York, I am going to sit down and write a book about Canada: a book that describes the disintegration of unity, the provincialism, the mad state of certain sections of public opinion e.g. Hepburn, and Aberhart, and the French Canadian state of mind.*

Graham drove to Quebec City in Irene's car and met her when she disembarked. They drove back to Toronto, where Graham stayed for about six weeks, until he got a call from Earl Thoenen to be in New York the next morning for interviews. From New York he wrote to Alan Plaunt, thanking him for the money which he sent and telling him that the decision as to whether or not he would be hired depended on two things: "will a Canadian do as a 'Britisher', and, second, should the appointment be made now or be delayed six months or a year?" Graham made the rounds again of broadcasting and publishing companies and told Irene that "the only reasonably hopeful chance is in the oil company group." There was another delay of a month, then another call from Thoenen. On 18 November Graham sent Irene two letters. Before lunch he wrote:

> *I am lunching with Thoenen and someone from California... There is no doubt whatsoever in Earl's mind that all is well... the financial arrangements are likely to be better than I first heard; the* [monthly] *salary will rise by another $50 starting at $350 with living expenses at $150; all travelling expenses will be additional to the above!*

After lunch he added:

> *I am employed, with the salary dating from Nov. 17, and expenses paid, including the return to Toronto via Ottawa and thence to New York. ... I will be employed for the Bahrein Petroleum Co. of Ottawa, Canada, by its London agent, the California Standard Oil Co. This company is the agent for 60 or 70 companies based upon Bahrein and operating throughout the world, but particularly in the east. ... I must go to London at once... I do not really want to go, but there is no other choice... I hate an ocean between us, I hate leaving Canada, I may enjoy but I really disapprove of becoming respectable.*

On 22 November Graham checked into the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa:

> *A whole crew welcomed me at the station... There is to be a dinner tomorrow night for me at the Chateau – white ties... Really everyone is terribly pleased – it seems position is what thrills people. I am pleased, of course, but why should I leave Canada?*

On 1 December Graham sailed for England. Irene wrote to him the same day, noting that it was "the last month of the year before we may hope to be married."

This period marked the end of Graham's only foray into active politics. It would be used against him on more than one occasion when he sought work that required the approval of the government in power in Ottawa, but it also worked in his favour when Tommy Douglas was elected as premier of Saskatchewan and asked Graham to represent the province in Europe.

1938-1939

An oil company executive; marriage; war.

> *Here am I, the nationalist, working for Americans and in England. And here am I the socialist serving the biggest of big business. All contrary to my wishes, contrary to my hopes, and accepted by an act of will. It is the failure, for the time, of one life, of the ideas of my own life I formed as early as grade eight in Winnipeg a quarter of a century ago. But was failure ever more generously rewarded? Not only security but prosperity is the fruit; and there will be you to share it.* (Spry to Irene Biss. NAC, Vol. 1-33)

Irene would join Graham as soon as she could get away at the end of the academic year. Between Graham's departure and their reunion, seven months later, the letters flowed back and forth, written almost daily but delivered in bundles when the boats arrived.

Graham had many friends in and around London: Vincent Massey was now Canada's High Commissioner in the United Kingdom; Mike Pearson was a counsellor at Canada House; and Betty Smart was still studying in London; Betty's father, Russel, was in London arguing a case before the Privy Council when Graham arrived; Gilbert Ryle, Graham's good friend from Oxford days, was now teaching at Oxford; Sir Stafford Cripps and his wife Isobel, whom Graham had first met in 1933 and had seen several times since, would become good friends. As well there were Irene's family and friends to meet. Irene's parents were still in Kenya but her sister Anne, her brother Evan and various aunts and uncles lived near London. Kitty Bareau had been at school with Irene, and she and her husband Paul were especially kind to Graham.

The first letter home, written on 9-10 December 1937, was sent to Irene but addressed also to Graham's parents, and his sister Constance and her husband, Roy East, with whom Irene would be spending Christmas:

> *I am, indeed, in London; I am shivering and I have been shivering since I landed at Southampton Monday night. But it is an excitement to be here, and I have seen numerous old friends, and today I am at last temporarily settled. ... I have a temporary room at two guineas a week, with no extras except telephone and the shilling slot machine for an electric heater.*

[This] *morning I duly reported to the office of the California Standard Oil company, the agent for the California Texas Oil Company, (Bahamas), and of the producing company, the Bahrein Petroleum Company (Ottawa). My office is not quite ready … but next Monday I will move into a large room with windows looking out on to the back of the Bank of England; Lothbury street is in the heart of the city, and number six is a good modern Canadian building, well-lighted, centrally heated, and owned by the Royal Bank of Canada. I am relieved; I feared a dark and dingy city office in the best Scrooge and Marley tradition.*

Lloyd Hamilton, my "boss" is a young, friendly, vigorous American and I am sure I will enjoy working under him. Friendly as he is, I think he will take some knowing, and I am sure my job will take some knowing; indeed, no one seems very sure what I am to do; but specifically, I am not to do the political observer's job, except mildly and in preparation, so to speak, for the days when I have learned the oil business. The questions which have so far been touched on are – workmen's compensation, establishing a training school for Bahrenis, securing personnel from the British universities, land laws respecting oil concessions in India, the significance of the Palestine situation for the oil industry, channels of communication between Jeddah, London, India and New York with regard to the routing of orders, etc. etc. The last is the most interesting: Ibn Saud ordered 18,000 gallons of oil, date of delivery early January, but he sent a camel train from Ryadh to Jeddah two weeks ago; no oil was available, who is responsible for feeding the camels and what will be the politico-psychological effects on Ibn Saud from whom the California Arabia Oil Company holds its Arabian concessions?

The other people in the office are mostly English. There are about half a dozen "executives"; these are American. The land and lease man is a Californian named Haynes, the second in command is in the States, a Mr. Lebkicher, there is a geologist I have not met, and I think some one else. I was very cordially received, and duly talked all morning; then, lunched with Hamilton, Haynes, and the two drillers, Bush and Gheno, who were on the Queen Mary *and who gave me free lectures on how to drill for oil.*

Tuesday evening I dined with A.H.E. Molson, former Cons. MP for Doncaster, whom I ran into at lunch. He is of the Montreal Molson family; we dined at 3 Whitehall Court, (GBS lives there) [George Bernard Shaw] *with Prof. John McDonald of Alta, and, if you please, Lionel Gelber. It was in some respects a dull evening – and a little enraging. Molson made a public speech to us in the dining room; and, in his rooms, the three of them entered into the most absurd generalizations about Canada, and about events in which I had participated or even initiated: and I could scarcely get a word in edgeways – which is the most enraging position a conversationalist can find himself especially on his own subjects. But the dinner was good and I walked back to*

Grosvenor House through the damp, glittering streets of London. Yes, it is good to be back, but how cold it is; I wear a sweater and socks to bed, and add an overcoat to my blankets!

Speaking of overcoats, I have paid two visits to my tailor on Sackville Street. He looked a little glumly at me until I told him what a great business executive I had become; I have ordered a smart blue suit, and overcoat, some shirts, and in due course, I propose to buy a black hat (yes, I must) and an umbrella. My overcoat, good as it is, simply will not do. ... I have written to Anne, and will ask her up to town or run down and see her next week. I hope I see much of her – it will be like seeing you once removed, so to speak, and I wish she were living in London. ... Much as I will enjoy being and working in London, I am going to feel a bit alone; there is none of the familiar and the intimate and the secure; it is indeed exile until you come over. ...

Today [the next day], *I rose late, after breakfast in bed at nine, walked down Constitutional Hill and watched the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace, proceeded through Downing Street to No. 1 and listened to a case before the Privy Council; an appeal from Ontario, Shredded Wheat vs Kelloggs Corn Flakes, with Sir Stafford arguing for Shredded Wheat, ... and opposed by Russel Smart... The P.C. room is small, oak panelled, dignified without being pretentious; Sir Stafford spoke concisely, reading at length from Canadian cases, and delivering less a speech than making polite conversation.*

Then I lunched with Mike Pearson at the Travellers Club – the third day in succession at this Pall Mall institution. Mike (confidentially) is fed up with many things, with London, with British foreign policy, and with the impossibility of getting any decision from Ottawa on any question. He is high in his praises of Mr. Massey, (I had a few words with him) and of the work of the Canadian office generally, but thinks the government gives no support or co-operation. He finds the Dominion office people dull, rather sticky, and quite unsociable – in two and a half years, Mike has never been in the home of a single Dominions office associate, except those of two men who were in Ottawa and who became his personal friends there. He was quite interesting on a series of situations: the rearmament programme is seriously lagging, despite statements to the contrary in the press; vital decisions are often delayed because the responsible officials are off huntin' and shootin', and he fears that the governing class simply refuses to take the threat of war seriously. In this there is the advantage that at least the British government alone among all European governments has no jitters and can think calmly: but it remains to be seen if they think well. I judge Mike feels that British policy has been consistently wrong at every crisis and that the world situation is growing steadily worse. ... I lunched yesterday with Gilbert Ryle, Lindsay Wellington, of the BBC and Isiah Berlin, fellow of All Souls, and philosophy don at New Coll. A lively and nourishing conversation on many subjects from Marx to Lord

> *Nuffield. … Gilbert walked down to my office and I introduced him to Lloyd Hamilton. They got along famously. Gilbert left to catch a train and Hamilton raised my pay ten percent! I am going to bring the Dean of Christ Church next time and get my salary doubled. …*
>
> *Last evening I had a mild drink with Russel Smart in the British Empire club, and walked back here to change. Betty and I went to see "The School for Scandal." It was only moderately well acted; the settings were rather effective, the lines were beautifully enunciated, but the company as a whole rates low in my humble judgement. John Gielgud, I heartily disapproved; he represents the worst conceit of the Oxford of my day … But Peggy Ashcroft was delightful… Betty and I went to Qualigna's* [sic], *ate and danced. She is in a very low state, and made me very angry. What a waste of talent and money these girls represent! She feels terribly low, talks about her life being finished, and so forth. I was not very helpful and the evening concluded as it had started, badly. The dance crowd was impossible; aristocrats mumbling with hot potato accents, climbers emulating them but knowing their failure; not a good dancer in the whole bunch, and only one girl whom I would want to meet. … But enough. I must write two or three other notes, call on my tailor, and then catch the train to Oxford* [to spend the weekend with Gilbert Ryle]. … *I have telephoned the Cripps and may see them in Oxford, but until I am settled and genteely clothed I am not looking up many other old friends.*

The weekend before Christmas Graham visited Irene's Aunt Mary and sister Anne:

> *I nearly died of cold. … Twelve hours of unredeemed mildew is too much for any mere Canadian. … For Christmas, I am going to Gilbert Ryle's in Newcastle on Tyne. I would prefer an oasis in the Sahara, but no doubt, in due course, my blood will adapt itself to a state of maximum humidity one degree above the freezing point. … this question of warmth must be dealt with somehow; either central heating, or, let us say, Scotch whisky.*

The week between Christmas and New Year's was spent in bed covered in mustard plasters applied by kind-hearted neighbours:

> *The fact is I was born to absorb oxygen, nitrogen & hydrogen from air – not from water and it takes a few days, I suppose, for me to step down the evolutionary scale & breathe like a fish – through gills.*

*

On 1 January 1938 Graham sent Irene a short note "to wish you were here to celebrate 'our' new Year." The following are all excerpts from letters to Irene:

> *But really, I cannot think of you as wife only. You must keep up your economics; I would feel enduringly guilty if so much training,*

experience, and skill were wasted on my mere happiness. How fortunate we are, so much in our two lives dovetails and complements the other.

***

I … have already paid off $235 of debts; and will start in February to buy government bonds every month, step by step with eliminating debts. For I must have a liquid reserve from now on, even if a few debts are paid more slowly.

***

And now to tea at Col. Vanier's – a charming French Canadian in the High Comm's office.

***

Today, I lunched with Mike Pearson, gleaned a little about the Hepburn/King fight over power and tonight I stayed at the office … for a letter writing session to friends here… Tomorrow I am breakfasting with Humphrey and Mary Carver at Malcolm Macdonald's. … and tomorrow evening I am joining Anne, Alex and Evan chez Anne.

I seldom hear politics discussed. Two things are seldom mentioned – the next war, or the Windsors. It is really remarkable. Certainly, we seem more war conscious in Canada.

When are you coming over? Why not just walk out of the classroom with the convincing and challenging statement that you are coming over to live with me and be my bride?

***

Yesterday, Saturday, I lunched with John Davies, who was Duncannon's tutor at Rideau Hall in Ottawa, and with Evan. I came home and read papers – in particular your Saturday Night *and the* New York Times *– and then, made my way to Wimbledon* [the Bareaus' home] *– arriving after multitudinous changes two of them due to my own fault, two due to inexplicable stoppages and expulsions on both busses and train.*

There was a large sherry party in progress; Audrey Malcolm and her husband were staying with Kitty; some other friends of yours had left by the time I arrived. The dinner was agreeable, and the conversation positively refreshing – I have scarcely heard a word of political gossip since I have been here. I like both Paul and Kitty. Kitty is exquisite – and she was dressed immaculately in a black velvet, with a full skirt, a narrow waist, a V neck, a tiny brass zipper to the waist, and a thin gold belt – it was delicious – and what perfect ankles! I can only complete this paean by saying no American could do better: but do not write this to her, as seems to be your evil habit; I would be embarrassed beyond words. … What a nice house the Bareaus have. I would love to hear them playing the piano together. This household – the numerous people at the sherry *party, the conversation, even the very language, all again drove home the vivid impression I formed on arrival – that this pernicious Anglo-Saxon race is horribly persistent in its characteristics and that there is a common culture or civilization, not English, not American, but both – that there are two creative centres, but that the stream between them is so broad and deep the two centres become almost one: the change and interchange is rapid, the time lag brief, and though the differences are important, and sometimes great, there is the fundamental moving stream and samplings from these depths in either centre are almost identical.*

Remember the $20 for Christmas is for frivolous and indelicate necessities – no mops, rent, hankies, tinned beans or other fundamentals: just the most dangerous silky things, and such.

***

Second hand cars are very cheap here, and when you come over, I will pick up one and meet you at the boat. I wish it were soon. I do not like being alone – and there is no pleasure in coming back to this empty room. Friends are all very well – and I have the best – but they are not enough. I suppose it is hopeless to hope for your advent earlier than six months from now. It seems an appalling and impossible distance in time.

There should be letters from you tomorrow; there are boats Monday or Tuesday at any rate. Joyful as a letter is do not let it interfere with your work: (though I must admit I grow less interested in your work than in your arrival here: indeed, there are moments when I damn your work fervently! – but not really.)

***

Several important concessions are on the way, and I have been mapping vigorously. I also had the task of working out the hectares in Syria east, deducting the hectares of existing concessions, and then estimating the cost of securing a blanket exploration lease for the whole territory. You know what my arithmetic is … but with the use of equal squares and a tracing of a map to scale, I was able with sufficient accuracy to wade from inches on a map to kilometres to hectares to concession "carrés," and to the cost at so many "livres syriennes" thence to pounds and dollars. And what is more I enjoyed doing it. Some sad chemical change must be occurring to make me enjoy arithmetic. … I am reading oil books, and books about the Near East in some profusion, with sidelong glances at imperial and military strategy. I find military strategy a delicious subject.

***

Saturday I went to "Time and the Conways." A Priestly play, and eminently popular in London. I thought it trite, trivial, and badly acted…

> *Monday, I took Betty to "The Three Sisters," a Chekhov play… This was a great play, exquisitely acted, and instinct with life. … next week … a dinner with Sir Stafford at the House of Commons… The following week end, Feb. 26th, I am going to proceed to the degree of M.A. (Oxon.) … After all, I must do something to keep up with you.*
>
> ***
>
> *I am finding life altogether painfully easy, and almost dull. … But there are no worries, no problems, no responsibilities, and no sense (after hours) of being part of things that are or to come.*
>
> ***
>
> *Come soon. … I am for once in my life really, really lonely, and company does not compensate.*
>
> ***
>
> *The $16.50 nightie sounds luscious: but do not restrain yourself: I am all for gross extravagance in essentials.*
>
> ***
>
> *Last night, I went first (at 6:45) to see "Snow White" … I was disappointed. Then at 8:45 to a lecture on the Trans-Iranian r.r.*

*

At the beginning of the following letter to Irene, dated 9 March 1938, Graham wrote "to be read in peace – not at the office or in a hurry!":

> *I have had my typewriter repaired at a cost which seems nothing less than piracy but it is some satisfaction to have a machine that is at hand and in order. I have dined, and I am about to settle into a quiet evening, writing and reading. It has been a really beautiful spring day, so spring-like and so beautiful that I nearly bought myself some flowers. I resisted and thought of them for you.*
>
> *First a few dull matters of business. Three days ago, I reached the end of my first three months in London as an "oil executive." In that period, I earned – including the check for this fortnight to be deposited by the time this letter reaches you – some $1,835, including both the $350 a month deposited in Toronto and the £40 a month paid to me here. Debts paid amounted to $722, the M.A. cost $120, and living, such clothes as shirts, ties, shoes, and the various weekends cost $623, a total expenditure of $1,465. … In a word, half of my expenditures have been on debts, and a very nice chunk has been bitten off them, though as much again remains without considering corporate debts… Actually, it has cost me more than I expected to live … and I would like to cut it down to not more than $5.00* [a day]. *The biggest expense is luncheon – that is entertaining at lunch, which is a frequent event… However, to be only $10 beyond the monthly "living allowance" is not so bad. … By*

the time you arrive, I would like to have every personal debt wiped off and a very nice cash balance. ... But these mundane matters duly reported upon, their entire opposite may be embraced.

And I do not know how to begin. One of the fearsome things about mutual love is that you hesitate, lest worry be caused, to open up the innermost sanctum and confess deep, distressing feelings, feelings that are no part of reason, or even of the conscious, but which flow in and out of consciousness from the spirit, the soul, or whatever, wherever it may be called. As I write now, I am full of contentment, happy with the sunny day, the smell of earth in the park, and the deep glory of communion, however indirect, with you in this letter.

But it is the odd, piercing feeling driving into consciousness in the early morning, or at night, or suddenly in a passing instant, unsuggested and unimpelled by the mind, that counts, that shapes and expresses characters, and in due course, I suppose, shapes the form and content of an individual; or it is suppressed and works its revenge through stultification or, at the worst, mental disorders.

This all sounds very formidable, but it only is meant at once as an invitation not to take what I say too seriously and to define the vague terrain about which I speak.

Two things. First, I hate and detest the ethics of business, it affronts every moral fibre in my being to be working for that impersonal person, a great corporation, and the charming character of my colleagues, the generosity of my own treatment, the ease of the conditions I work under, are no compensation. Time and again, that most appalling of all realizations bites through the good meals, the comfortable, unhurried, unworried existence I lead, the realization of the utter purposelessness morally of what I have to do; and that it is temporary and for an ultimate purpose, in no ways condones in my mind the offence. I can make no virtue of that necessity. I know, by every reasonable test, I had to and should have left the CCF. I am not sure it would not have been wise even if it had not been necessary; and on moral grounds, right. But still the cold and acid fact is – what am I working for now, day to day? and there is no just answer. I feel isolated from the world that is my world, the life that is my life.

And the corollary of this is – strange enough it would seem to a mundane mind – is that, for all its ease, this is a harder life than I was leading, a much less happy one than I had with five dollars a week; and that if I am to survive it is going to take more will, more moral sense now than then. I can fully understand why people, caught in the net of circumstance, turn to religion, and cultivate some intimate faith, but that way is – for me – oblivion. Escape is no escape. The only solution is – how shall it be described – a creative moral purpose? I do not know what the term is, but it has to be something so selfless that it is quintessentially "impersonal" and the self has to be so utterly absorbed *in it that it is fully "realized." I want all the experience I can get out of my present work, travel, administration, knowledge, adventure, and I want to do my full duty to my employers, but being secure, well paid, unpressed, unworried, easy-going and to no purpose that can be justified morally is no life for me. In the long run, it would destroy me like a disease; and even now it has to be fought.*

But is party politics my ultimate future? Certainly, it is not if I am to be reduced to the dependence upon a party for livelihood. That, too, is a negation of freedom. The fact that I could only hope for a more secure livelihood from the CCF through the "machine" stands out more and more as one of the decisive elements in my long drawn out determination to resign. In politics, of all lives, dependence upon a party is dangerous; one must be free of such economic considerations if a free choice is to be made. You may and must compromise, one's own views will seldom fully coincide with a party's or a single colleague's, but that compromise must itself be freely willed and not economically shaped. If I had remained in the CCF, I would have been a paid party agent; a very different situation from personal contributions or the few dollars earned through the New Commonwealth. *I am sure, then, of this – no return to the CCF as a party hack. …*

One other. I hate to think that I may be, if only half, responsible for taking you out of your own sphere and changing your well-shaped life. It would be such a waste to make you into only a wife. There are lots of husbands and wives, but how few are the creative people, and in Canada, especially. Much as I would selfishly hasten your advent here – and if I thought you might come now, no worry of this kind would ennoble me to encourage you to remain there – I hate the thought of all your training and knowledge not being useful somehow, somewhere, and preferably to Canadians. So you, too, will have to fight "big business" in its too agreeably sinuous influences – and help my fight as well.

But I have said "enough" to this; and in contradiction, turn to the tempting and adventuresome possibility of going to Arabia. There is no suggestion that I might go … but if I learned Arabic, if I volunteered to go, I am not too sure that I would not be sent. It is a hard, hard life – all the terrors of the cantonment without the discipline and hierarchy of an army as protection. But Arabia really stirs me and if this new field really comes through … there will be much to do on the administrative and political side, and as conditions are so hard – living conditions in the sense of no comforts, hot weather, and no contrasts like theatres … the pay is very large, and all living and travelling costs are added unto it. … There is some risk to health, and even to person, but somehow something hard, absorbing, crisply venturesome, has its appeal to me: provided you wish that experience, too.

And, to end on a gay note – yes, we will be married without much ado. … We could be married the moment you landed, if you so wish. …

> *Whether I can get a holiday so soon as July is another question, I am sure I could if it were wise to ask, but that is for the future and not so vitally important. The important essential is to come home and see your light in the window; that more than all else. I never want to see a dark window, or unlock myself another door in all this life.*

Irene wrote back, asking Graham to "think once more":

> *are you sure you want to give up freedom and take on responsibilities that may come thick and fast? We may have several children and children are so inevitable and unremitting once they arrive. My dear, I could do without you if it would be for your good, and if it was the only way of leaving you free to fulfil yourself and your life's work. Please think carefully again. If I did not love you so much I could not ask it.*

Graham replied:

> *we are getting married: there are no second thoughts: and the wisest wisdom enjoins us to such a happy judgement. My plans – and yours – are built not only desirably but necessarily, inviolably on such a judgement and its fulfillment. I reject, therefore, out of hand, your generosity… And that's that.*

Nine days later, Graham raised an issue that could be an impediment to their marriage:

> *The international situation could not be much worse and none but the most depressing conclusions may be drawn. War will be avoided on only a single alternative – that Great Britain abandons Europe to Germany, the Mediterranean to Italy, and lets the Empire disintegrate. I say this with the utmost seriousness. .. Before this letter reaches you, Poland and Germany will have done a deal over Lithuania, and it will not be surprising if Germany seizes Memel and Poland occupies Lithuania proper. Before the summer is out, Hungary will have been irretrievably linked to Germany and Austria… And unless France pours aid into Spain, that peninsula which it has been British policy to keep weak, will have become a bastion of German and Italian power on the Mediterranean and Cape routes upon which Britain depends.*
>
> *These events march to their conclusion, and they can be halted only by war. The Chamberlain-Halifax-Lothian-London* Times *and* Observer *policy of arrangements with the axis powers is shattered and in ruins; there may be a faint hope of some deal with Italy, but it will be bought at such a price that the people of Britain may rebel against it; and it is but a temporary hope, for Italy will not keep any agreement. There can be no compounding with aggressors. There can be no agreement but an agreement sustained by force and maintained by the threat of war.*
>
> *The one other hope is the formation of what Churchill calls a "grand alliance." It cannot be created too soon, and already it may be too late. British armament cannot keep pace with German expansion; Austria is*

> *a great re-enforcement in terms of food supply, iron ore, and manpower; Austria represents "armaments" not only transferred to Germany, but subtracted from France and Britain. … Britain and France cannot proceed alone. The "grand alliance" must be built and it can only be built on the ruins of the League.*
>
> *And I do not think the Chamberlain government can do it. I doubt if the other nations have enough confidence in Chamberlain's administration; and there is rapidly accelerating opposition in Britain. … The Beaverbrook press, the Rothermere press, the* Times, *the* Observer, *the* Telegraph, *all sing the tune of "isolation"; Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Spain are none of our affairs, etc. etc. The people in the City sing the same tune. Peace at any price, Spain's, Japan's, Austria's price, but not ours. Has there ever been such a surrender by a governing class in history?*
>
> *There is tension in the air. The papers are running campaigns for air raid precautions; a bookseller told me that the sale of handbooks (I bought one) on gas protection measures had reached the proportions of a "run" since the Austrian invasion. Yet, the* Times *and its confreres write as if nothing had happened, would happen, to Britain: it is all a remote affair about which we should not be too concerned. … And what of us? If the world goes to pieces this summer, do you think you should come over? Is there anything we can build on? Are you wise in leaving Toronto? These are questions but they are not to be taken seriously, however serious they are.*

Irene suggested she might as well go to London immediately: "Of what use studies of power in an extinct civilisation if there is war?"

*

Irene sailed on 11 June 1938 on the *Empress*. Graham wrote one last letter to her to be delivered to the ship at Cherbourg:

> *If all is well and there are no delays, the* Empress *should dock the evening of the 16th; if there are delays, then early June 17 – but whatever the time, I will be waiting. Think of me, then, counting the minutes and swearing that there must never again be so long and hard a separation, even though the joy of being re-united is so great. Better the great heights of an upland plain than these valleys and peaks. … Oh, my dear, I hope you are sure, that your doubts are ended, and that you are happy, now and forevermore. The years are ours, a life of rich communion and joy and soon that certainty will be ours.*

They married in Chelsea Old Church on 30 June 1938, within days of Irene's arrival in London. The wedding ceremony was witnessed by Gilbert Ryle and Kitty Bareau. Graham and Irene had a brief honeymoon in Crans-sur-Sierre, Switzerland, and soon afterwards settled into a flat at 25 Cheyne Place in London.

*

In September 1938, Gladstone Murray cabled Graham asking if he would "undertake occasional objective commentaries by telephone beam from Broadcasting House." Graham explained to his mother after the first few were aired that "the BBC like me to give just a touch of local colour in order that there may be a London 'framework' and they insist upon me using 'I' – I do not like to, but the personal seems to be part of broadcasting technique in the type of talk I am giving."

Early in 1939 Graham's mother became very ill, and in February Graham made a visit to Canada to see her. Irene could not accompany him as she had teaching commitments at Cambridge one day a week, and a contract to do some writing for the London *Economist*. Graham landed in New York, spent a day at the offices of Standard Oil, then went to Ottawa where his parents were living. Between visits with his mother there were long visits and chats with old friends. He kept Irene informed, as the following letters written from Ottawa and Montreal demonstrate:

> *But what intolerance! It is almost impossible to discuss any political subject, least of all foreign affairs. There is a clean cut, virulent division between the pro- and anti-Chamberlains and no matter what I say seems to provoke emotion. ... My impartial broadcasts, for example, are regarded as too impartial by both sides!*
>
> *Speaking of the broadcasts, they seem to have had an enormous audience. The CBC is simply delighted and I have met scarcely a person who has not mentioned them. ... As for general conditions – there is one cry, Why doesn't King do something. ... Alex J.'s estimate is that public opinion, even in Quebec, is far ahead of the government. As he puts it, "No matter what they do on Parl. Hill, the Canadian people will fight." ... But hate of Hitler is scarcely less strong than hate, deep personal hate, of Chamberlain. It is phenomenal. ... and putting up with the old stuff about "going capitalist" from one side, and "come to your senses" on the other. Neither are pleasant, though neither are said seriously or rudely. ... I send you all my love, that familiar phrase, but proved and strengthened now by such completely happy months together.*
>
> ***
>
> [B]*ut what depressed me* [in Montreal] *was the absolute emotional conviction everyone held about Chamberlain's complete fascism, England's degeneracy, etc. ... Even my most moderate suggestion that Chamberlain is not a villain earns me the charge of being an apologist. Even Frank Scott and Brooke Claxton had difficulty in maintaining reasonableness and they simply wrote off everything I said. Indeed, so unreasonable is everyone that by sheer contrariness I take Chamberlain's side. Frankly, the misrepresentation, the prejudice, the violence, the impatience of people is astonishing. ... Perhaps, I exaggerate, but frankly it has been very discomforting to find totalitarian minds*

> *among one's friends. … This separation from you has nothing to commend it.*
>
> ***
>
> [H]*ere I am in the familiar surroundings of the press gallery using Carl Reinke's typewriter. … The Ontario CCF is in a terrible mess, the Stafford Printers is about to fold up, and the* Commonwealth *may follow. They have raised money enough to put on a radio programme and chose that instead of saving the press and the paper. … The* Forum *however is getting by… The CCF nationally is doing well and all parties say they will increase their strength in the west – even Arnold Heeney said as much and also Mr. Dafoe.*
>
> *The same old annual attack on the CBC is in full swing… The fight is on and Alan Plaunt is doing great work.*
>
> *I went to the Chateau with Mrs. Turner, one of the Tariff Board economists – she is supposed, indeed, to run the board and to have much to do with the budget. She has two children, and went to Bryn Mawr and the London school. Perhaps, you know her. … Speaking of Canada… First, definitely anti-British feeling was never stronger, and the King's visit is almost universally attacked … as a dodge to get Canada into the next war. … Second, the general conviction among people of anything but the Britain right or wrong school seems to be that as Britain is on the down grade, Canada's future lies in closer association with the United States. … I saw the Governor-General at his request and had half an hour's talk with him on sundry subjects.*

In one of Irene's replies she told Graham that she might be expecting their first child. He replied that he hoped it was true and added, in a subsequent letter:

> *If confirmation comes, I will tell Mother just before I leave or send a note to her as I sail so that her thoughts on my departure may be diverted to a new life.*
>
> *This note is just a word of love and greeting, a moment of communion with you and an expression of my need to be near you, with you. I do not like this absence, and miss you in a thousand ways.*
>
> ***
>
> *Daniel* [Graham's brother, who had joined the army in 1932] *is being married in Halifax. He is marrying Betty* [Forbes], *going by boat to Boston and thence to New York; I will see them there before I sail. Father is furious and tried to stop the event … but happily, the department of national defence granted Daniel permission. … Mother and father are moving to Toronto and have a house five minutes away from Constance and the children.*

The following excerpts are from letters Graham wrote to his mother after his return to London:

> *First of all, many thanks for your welcome and for your hospitality in Ottawa. I enjoyed being at home and with you and father more than I can say and it is only the sad nature of modern things, which disperses families across the globe, that keeps me away from you. But there is more in deep relationships than presences, that is, though there are absences, physical absences, still in mind and heart we can be close to one another and in the deepest sense with one another. And you know that whatever I can do to help you, in any way, it is there for the asking.*
>
> ***
>
> *The European situation is not cheerful but I would not worry about it. If there is a real possibility of war involving England, the office is leaving London and will be far from any danger. …* [Irene] *is remarkably well, and burbling with the fine weather, her husband, her work, and the future child and I have never seen her looking better or more cheerful.*
>
> ***
>
> *On Sunday, Irene and I went to St. Albans. It has a "Cathedral and Abbey Church" in memory of the first British martyr (he was martyred for freedom of speech) and unusually well preserved remains of a Roman city that Boadicea destroyed in her rebellion against the Romans. We went to the morning service, lunched in a pub called the Red Lion, spent the afternoon in Verulamium, saw the Roman pavement and central heating (a civilized comfort since forgotten on this island), a Roman theatre; then, we had tea in another ancient pub and were home by eight. A very pleasant and beautiful day. St. Alban's is a place to visit and revisit; it is scarred or ornamented by the whole range of English history from the Britons, the Belgae and the Romans to the surging flights of Hurricane fights from the nearby aerodrome.*
>
> *Monday – last night – I went to dinner with Irene at Mike Pearson's and gossiped about politics, European and Canadian. I gathered the certain conviction that Britain and Russia are well on the way to a military alliance, that the "iron ring" around Germany is being forged successfully, and that British re-armament is coming along at a rapid rate – in brief, that the situation, in terms of British strength, in terms of allies and armament, is growing to such an extent that it may have some influence on Hitler and restrain him from dangerous adventure.*

Late in 1938 Graham started another diary which was mainly devoted to the political situation and preparations being taken in the event of war. In February 1939 he wrote:

> *Irene was in Cambridge Thurs. tutoring her little Newnham and Girton girls. Miss Jones said Girton had the most express instructions to*

> *prepare to receive evacuated people at the earliest possible moment – delay was to be the minimum.*
>
> ***
>
> *Plans for a deep shelter in No. 10 Downing St. have been completed. First diff. was to get the PM's agreement to what he called "spoliation of my garden" – a favorite spot of his. When G. went to the Treas. office they refused action – "no policy of deep shelters for public – we cannot make exceptions for the PM." … Last night went to "Stolen Life" with Kitty Bareau while Paul & Irene went to D.H. Robertson's lecture on "The Rate of Interest."*

In April the entries demonstrate an increasing concern over the international situation:

> *London is full of obvious preparations for defence; the trenches in the parks, dug at the time of the Cz-sl.* [Czechoslovak] *crisis are being completed with iron and concrete, there are recruiting posters everywhere and troops, usually territorials, are more and more numerous on the streets. Constantly one runs into stories of government offices preparing their documents for instant evacuation to selected places out of London, of people sending their families to the country or their children to America.*
>
> ***
>
> *Fagan … said the view around the* Evening Standard *editorial rooms was that if there was no war this weekend, there would be no war. The weekend passed. I hope he is right. … Irene gathered from somewhere that Ward Price of the* Daily Mail *was saying that there would be no war until after the harvest in Europe was garnered…*
>
> *Mike broadcasts under the name Michael Macdonald. One of his broadcasts aroused the ire of the* Toronto Telegram *which complained that the "Canadian" misrepresented Canada and was not pro-British. W.T. Cranfield called Mike, on a cable from the Tely, and asked Mike to try and find out who Macd. was. Mike did not enlighten him.*

In July Graham wrote:

> *When Irene and I reached the Thames at 1:15 after a combined breakfast and lunch, the tide was flowing and almost at its zenith. Between Chelsea and Albert bridges, three dinghies were tacking to and fro across the river in a spanking breeze from upstream. The sun was warm. … But there were signs of the times… The trees and lamp posts along the Embankment, at least in Chelsea, are now painted with white circles for the nights when lights might not be permitted. There were notices of the black-out on August 9th, and the inspection of gas masks. In the Royal hospital gardens, there is a large galvanized steel shed, several camouflaged tents, and a number of anti-aircraft guns… Some trial of*

> *strength before the snow blows again and fighting weather passes, without a miracle, is taken for granted.*

On 31 August 1939 events were reaching their climax, as Graham noted:

> *There is only one opinion in London, and from all accounts, it is the opinion of Britain as a whole: we have had enough of Hitler, things cannot go on as they are, and he must be cracked this autumn, without a war, we hope, but with a war if necessary.*

*

In July 1939 Graham's father died unexpectedly. Graham wrote long, consoling letters to his mother. He also told her about Britain's preparation for war:

> *My diversion, besides trying to finish up a paper on logarithms, was counting the balloons of the balloon barrage. There is a balloon, so the paper says, every mile on concentric circles with the Tower of London as the centre of a 14 mile diameter. The balloons are very self-satisfied, sleek, motionless gentlemen, and very English. ... They are smaller and more chunky than the silver queens we used to see from Folkestone, and of course, have no engine – they simply rise and are held in place by a wire. ... I have received a number of letters about father. One is from Mr. Mackenzie King, which was really very thoughtful.*
>
> ***
>
> *There have been air manoeuvres and a blackout, also. The air manoeuvres have kept the air filled with the roar of engines. The blackout was postponed because the night of Aug. 9/10 was too black for a blackout. Last night proved fair and the cloud broke up. I stayed up until 1:15 and watched the lights of London snap into darkness. It was an eerie feeling. At 11:45 the great bowl of London, from Hampstead to Wimbledon was glowing. Then, as the street lights of each borough went out, the glow faded and finally, sharp at 12:30 Big Ben, faintly seen above the shadowed towers of Westminster Abbey, went black. A stream of army trucks with darkened lamps swung along Chelsea Embankment. A few stray house lights disappeared as Air raid wardens warned the forgetful reader. But one light stayed on – that, presumably, of a rebellious artist in the Tower building where studios are found. It is said that the blackout was not a success, that the scouting aeroplanes I heard and saw shooting across the sky could pick out the main highways, that may be, but to my eyes, from the top of no. 25 Cheyne Place, London was dark, dark, indeed.*
>
> *Irene is well, but has to rest more and more; indeed, she has to be made to rest. The doctor insists the date is late September or even October, now, and accordingly, Irene delays making up her mind as to when she*

> *will head towards Toronto. The fact is she is, of course, avoiding making the decision, but she will have to make up her mind quite soon.*

Irene left England on 2 September, the day before war was declared. She did not want to leave but Graham insisted. Irene had been on the Air Raid Precautions Committee for the building in which she and Graham lived, and was learning about planning before, and procedures during, air raids. One evening she explained to Graham the rudiments of child delivery in the event that they found themselves trapped in an air raid when the baby chose to arrive. The next morning she found herself booked on the *Empress of Britain* bound for Canada. It was not a happy trip for Irene:

> *You may guess that this is not proving one of the liveliest voyages possible. It has been most somnolent. In the intervals of sleep I have indulged in lying in my bunk thinking about you and wondering how you are and what you are doing.*
>
> *We get very little news… For a time it looked as though where Hitler & his ex-friends fight wars without declaring them we were going to declare war without fighting it, but it seems really to be underway now. … Baggage is to be ready today so … I guess we're getting near the great Dominion. It will be very nice to see it, though I'd far rather see England, a thing I would never have believed to be possible! Such a reluctant return is quite beyond my imaginings.*

From alongside the quay at Quebec City Irene wrote:

> *The St. Lawrence has been superb – what a country! The mountains to the north were at their loveliest, with stray gleams of sun picking out churches and villages and then floods of sun and then clouds again, and through it all a clear brilliance that I had almost forgotten. If only you had been here to share the sense of space and freedom, the release and exhilaration. … If it's true we have broken through the Siegfried Line, and if bombers are constantly turned back perhaps I can come back to you again soon.*

Irene stayed with Graham's mother for a few weeks, then moved in with Liz Gordon whose husband, Walter, was in Ottawa during the week. She stayed with the Gordons until after the Sprys' first child, Robin, was born at the end of October.

1939-1942

A son; the Home Guard; air raids; Sir Stafford Cripps.

> *And the people. How great they are. My heart, my admiration goes out to the people of this city. Yes, and to the people of Paris, Warsaw, Berlin, Rome. It is they who will pay for the folly, and the blindness of their betters. But they were calm, unembittered, determined, grim and superbly cheerful. Their day will come.* (Spry to his mother. NAC, Vol. 1-13)

With Irene's departure, Graham gave up the flat in Chelsea and moved into the Wimbledon home of Geoffrey Crowther, along with journalists who worked at the *Economist* whose families had also gone either to America or to the countryside far from London. The group, five men in all, included Paul Bareau who was the banking editor at the *Economist* and writer for the *News Chronicle*. In the first few days at Wimbledon the war bachelors "retired twice (with gas masks, torches, brandy, etc.) to Geoffrey's trench. ... Both alarms were caused by the observation of aircraft which proved to be friendly."

Concurrent with the change of abode there was a very brief change of employment. On 4 September Graham was summoned by telephone and began work with the British Ministry of Information (MOI) on the Canada desk. He told Irene:

> *The terms and details of the job are not yet arranged finally. But there will necessarily be a sad yet not disastrous decline in our income. ... roughly, the transfer from peace to war will cost 50%.*
>
> ***
>
> *I am in the policy side of the MOI in charge of the Canadian section. ... Roy* [Lebkicher] *approves and has sent a cable urging I be allowed a "leave of absence" and retain my connection with the comp. so that after the war I can return.*

Within a few weeks Graham reported that "the new job is not very satisfying – the muddle in the Ministry to begin with was beyond belief." On 4 October he wrote of his dissatisfaction:

> *My job remains confused and not very interesting. Indeed, after one*

> *month, it is difficult to say what I have done. Certainly, I have done nothing in or for Canada, though I have tried, usually without success, to help Canadian newspaper correspondents here. What is to be done is perfectly clear, but nothing happens. I have made proposal after proposal – the results are nil. Most of the staff feel as I do, that we are not doing a job, and that there are too many of us doing too little. However, this is for time to correct, and the true civil servant keeps such criticisms to himself.*
>
> *Boredom still remains the principal aspect of life in London. … There are five of us here in Wimbledon and that is agreeable. … It is a pleasant group and I am very glad I am not marooned alone in some flat or other. … My best to Alfred* [Alfred the Great was the nickname given to their unborn child]. *It will be a great relief when the news comes that all is over and that you both are well. It is hard to be away from a first child, but there is still hope that this miserable war will not last too long or that some reason may take me back to Canada. I miss you beyond words.*

On 18 October Irene received a cable from Graham, telling her that he had resigned from the MOI and was returning to the oil company. A short hand-written letter the next day gave a bit more information:

> *Well, the Empire Publicity Division of the Ministry has been abolished and I with it. … Our people were furious. We have a very distinguished group of former senior … officials, professors etc., and they felt, as I felt, very resentful. All of us made sacrifices in joining this miserable and inefficient ministry, most of us are quite ready to go, but we resented the lack of fairness and consideration – and all of us said so in firm but dignified (I hope) words.*
>
> *I cabled Murray and suggested resuming broadcasting. I hope it may be possible.*

On 22 October Graham was back at the oil company. He used one of its typewriters to bring Irene up-to-date on all the news:

> *Last night there was an admirable airmail letter waiting for me when I arrived home. It was the letter recounting the series of dinners that you and Alfred have been attending. … Is there not a danger that Alfred may be developed into as gay a blade as his now aged and black-outed father? But I do not begrudge him such diversions – I only wish I were with you and with him.*
>
> *I am writing in the office. This is my weekend of alleged duty, devoted to writing letters and to interviewing anyone who appears. No one, while I have been here, has ever appeared, but this is war and someone must be on guard. … The purge of the Ministry was quite an event. We received a letter saying resign or be kicked out, and before we had sent our letters in, we received a further letter saying that our resignations had been accepted. The tone of the letter was curt, more curt than one*

> *would use to an office boy caught with his hands in the petty cash: though it did concede that the resignation was required not because our labours had been unsatisfactory but because the reorganization was required. With the reorganization I am in agreement, and though I was beginning to do things in the last fortnight, the work was not responsible enough to justify the salary I was getting. In such circumstances, it would have been only necessary for the senior people to ask me to resign – it was not necessary to put a gun to my head. … I am sorry, very sorry, however to leave HM's service especially as there is not a very great deal to do with Casocol* [California Standard Oil Company]*… I would prefer something more active, closer to war as war is.*
>
> *The war continues in its peculiar way. Despite the demand of the American press for thrills, I sincerely hope the same methods of war continue. Germany is in a desperate situation. She is, indeed, doomed, and the only question is what price must be paid. Her alternatives are three, first, try to break through the Maginot line directly or by flank movements through Switzerland or Belgium and Holland; two, try to break the British navy with mass air attacks, three, hold the Siegfried line and pray for peace or Russian assistance. The first would be a terrible business for the German soldier. The second is being tried out, and suggests no certain success. The third is highly doubtful. … Take care of yourself and bid Alfred welcome for me the moment he arrives. I will wait anxiously for the cable and when it comes, I will shoot the postcards you addressed round the Brit. Emp. announcing the event.*
>
> *My very best to Liz and Walter. They are wonderfully kind and please tell them I appreciate it as much as you do.*

Early on the morning of 26 October Graham saw a delivery man walking up the front path; he ran to the door and a few seconds later shouted to the other men, "It's a boy!" The day after the birth a euphoric Irene, from her hospital bed, provided further details:

> *Did you get any telepathy? Not that there was much time for it! A swifter arrival has seldom been seen – Liz's forebodings about Alfred arriving either on a street car or in house were not so far from fulfillment!*
>
> *At about 3:50 p.m. I went to get ready to go to tea with the Carvers and behold the "show" I had been told of as one of the three warnings. I 'phoned Armie* [Dr. Armstrong] *who inquired about pains. There had been none, only a stretching feeling. He said he'd come to see me en route from the office. Liz was out with the kids so I called Mary Carver and Betty Ratz about a Commerce Club meeting I'm due at tonight and went to lie down. At that point the water broke and the pains began – when they do there's no mistaking them! Thank Heaven it rained because at that moment Liz came back, 'phoned Armie, got someone in for the kids … and off we set. The pains were coming every five minutes by now and hard enough to make me wish they weren't. Everyone at the hospital was very calm … the gas and air produces the most*

> *irresponsible cocktail effect so that most of the time I felt extremely witty and laughed like little Audrey. In between times and before they got the gas going, though I got enough of the pains to sympathise deeply with our ancestresses and the victims of female circumcision. It is a most extraordinary absorbing pain. The world just ceases to exist … the need for tremendous effort is almost more terrific than the pain and the intervals of respite are miraculous. Alfred came along like a bird, the nurses were grand and Armie is just swell. In fact a good time was had by all. I can remember telling them my favourite Freuchen story about the Eskimo woman and then they put me clean under – I guess it was the last straw! I came to hurting like hell in the middle of the tummy and where they stitched me up but still feeling very cheerful. They produced Alfred who appeared to be dressed in a string of wampum and a blanket. It seemed to me that this was carrying Canadiana too far, but it transpires that the wampum is for purposes of identification.*
>
> *He looked absurdly fat and angry at being precipitated into a cold hard world but very – entirely – satisfactory. I'm afraid I laughed at him and only wished you could have been there. I'll take some photos as soon as I can. It has been too dark all day today – a London fog in this crisp Canadian fall – and I have lacked energy.*
>
> *Today I really met him – that is his head. The rest of him, including his hands were entirely swathed in nightgowns and things. His hair … is long and dark, I think black. His eyes, which he keeps firmly shut nearly all the time between pink and bulging lids, are the sort of baby blue that will probably turn dark. His eyebrows are an indistinct smear of fluff, and to me his nose looks like a blob of putty, but Liz says it's beautiful and all the nurses agree it is ravishing… His ears really are ravishing – so tiny and his chin and mouth are entirely adorable and beautifully shaped. He was divided in his mind as to whether to use his mouth for yawning or sucking. We let him suck for three minutes – no milk yet – and he went at it with gusto. He knows his job all right. Before hand he kept trying to suck his thumbs through the nighty, but grabbed my finger and had a go at it. An intelligent child, and full of vigour! He didn't cry at all. He's simply adorable Graham. I showed him your picture and he looked at it carefully, and approvingly. Darling, why aren't you here? … Liz has been marvellous. She says she'd rather be the mother than the father any day! She sent off all sorts of messages yesterday … but couldn't remember whether she said Alfred weighed 7 lbs 11 oz (correct) or 11 lbs 7 oz! … Sweetheart, I'm so excited I don't know what to do. Thank you so much for Alfred. I love you, dearest, from the botton of my heart. … Let's have another baby* soon.

There are few other of Irene's letters from this period on file. One, dated 2 November, tells Graham that "King Gordon is to be married on Sunday to one Ruth [Anderson] – the Art Director at Farrar Rineharts" in New York, where King was working (he had gone to New York to assist with the publication of his father's last book). A telegram, dated 10

December, announced "Alfred's" name: "Provisionally Robert Graham Michel short Robin."

*

On 15 November Graham wrote to his mother:

> *Your letter of the 30th arrived yesterday morning and with two letters of Irene aided me in visualizing the unseen son and heir. I judge from both accounts that my son is a very determined fellow; both Irene's letters as well as yours spoke of this determination. Irene also sent me a piece of the gentleman's hair; I must say it looked very much like my own, though perhaps less blown by the hard world.*
>
> *One of these days a snapshot will (censors permitting) arrive and then I can discuss resemblances. At the moment, I can only imagine a sort of generalized baby at various moments of the day, and hope that it will not be too long before I am able to see him in Canada. And I am glad that he is a Canadian, very glad. At least, I have that to thank Hitler for. If he had been born over here, he would not have been a Canadian in law or fact as accepted by law.*
>
> *London has its blackout, its sandbags, balloons and so on, but life slowly insists upon being normal: the feeling of siege disappeared a month or more ago, and everyone is so confident that Churchill's challenge to "come on and fight" really met with enthusiastic support. No doubt you heard him on the radio. I did not like some of his phrases, but I liked the good rousing nature of the speech as a whole.*
>
> *I still hope to resume broadcasting. If so, I will stay with the present job and consider broadcasting and oil a sufficient contribution to victory; but if broadcasting does not resume, I may become an air raid warden or some such civilian servant.*
>
> *What is Daniel doing? Where is he? I heard he had been promoted, and that he was at Val Cartier, but apparently he is in St. Jean. Is he coming over?*

Daniel Spry arrived in England around Christmas time. Graham met him and was very moved at the sight of the Canadian soldiers getting off the train and marching to their barracks. After Christmas, Graham started looking for another job, one that would involve him in the war effort in some capacity. The job search, through Canadian contacts, continued for several months but did not yield any results. Irene and Robin, meanwhile, moved into an apartment on Madison Avenue in Toronto. The following excerpts are from letters to Irene beginning in December 1939:

> *There is a war on and I should have some share in it, both morally and from the point of view of the future. ... Ideally, of course, what I would like to do is something that somehow would lead back to Canadian politics, and to that end, I wish I could get into some Canadian side of the war.*

***

I mentioned one job that seemed to promise exactly what we want. … it would amount to being Mike's assistant. The obstacles will be in Ottawa. But if the job came through it would mean a real responsibility here and a highway back home after the war.

***

The office could not be more quiet; Spike's comment is "on a busy day I write two letters – one of them personal."

***

A job was definitely in sight. Ottawa cabled suggesting me. The job is partly military and partly diplomatic.

***

How miserable it is to be separated. I have never felt so dull, idle and bored in all my existence, but please do not conclude that I deserve any sympathy; life here is actually too agreeable and that is my main complaint. If I had more work, it would be better, but nothing but reunion will complete it. Perhaps that is not so far off as we fear.

There is still no word from the powers-that-be either official or company.

***

As I cabled I spent the weekend with Dan and Betty; I stayed in Dan's room in the mess, attended a cocktail party and supper, went to a dance at the officers' club; and thoroughly enjoyed seeing dozens of old friends. I saw Mac Macfarlane; you can tell Marguerite he is well, but not I judge very busy. … The woods were full of Zetes, also, whole armies of them; and as I have said before it is a pleasure to be among old Canadian friends.

Dan is most highly thought of; everyone speaks of his ability and not only of that, they like him as much as they think well of him. I expect, as I wrote, that he will be a major shortly.

***

Mike sent for me today, and proceeded to outline four different jobs which have just been authorized, and by this morning's mail came the offer of a fifth; over the weekend, I was offered a sixth. Some of them were definite enough to enable me to tell Roy and the position now is that San Francisco is being cabled for a provisional leave of absence if required; provisional in the sense that it may be used when the Canadian authorities have made a definite offer. … You will appreciate my amusement (and pleasure) to have all of them laid on my doorstep, and at the same moment. What pleases me most of all, of course, is that *friends here and in Ottawa from the PM, the Minister of National Defence etc. … and diplomats, all want to get me back into Canadian life. That thought fills me with the deepest, most stirring joy. Think of us, when this trouble is over, all together in Canada as Canadians again.*

But there are less happy thoughts for the immediate future. There are risks. There is indefinite separation. But whatever the job that comes through, I am *coming back to Canada first. I make that clear to everyone, and I will only abandon the insistence if it means losing the chance of being in Canadian work again. … I am hoping beyond hope that before this letter arrives, I will have cabled that I am on the way; and I will come by a safe route, the safest that is available. … I am alone tonight and will also spend it reading: Geoffrey comes home rarely and is closing up the house at the end of the month. By that time I hope my plans will be clear, that I will be on the way to Canada, and that I will be either a diplomat or a major.*

***

I cabled you on Tuesday just to let you know how the situation stood; there will be no change until after the elections, that is the whole story. … So the waiting continues, but it is not without its advantages.

The lunch and tea with Clare Luce was arranged by Max T. [Thornburg, of Casocol]… *Clare Luce is agreeable, stimulating company; but revealed none of the devastating wit of the Women or the range of information of* Time and Life. *Indeed, she appeared more as a very clever social person, less as a wit. She is visiting Europe for* Time, *but clever as she is in picking up information and keeping a conversation going, her knowledge of Britain and Europe is of a very modest order. "Who is this Sir Harry Wilson who runs the Prime Minister?" she asked, meaning Sir Horace. And she said that the USA was subsidizing the Canadian army over here because United States, being a non-aggressive country made it unnecessary for Canada to defend her frontiers with the States! … So much for Tuesday, March 19. Now for a few odd items. I am going down to Aldershot (to Dan and Betty) for Good Friday, returning to be in the office (the only one) Saturday if I am required, and thence to Marjorie Butler's for the Easter weekend. There tennis is promised and will be welcomed, for I have had no exercise but short walks for aeons.*

***

The election results are much to my taste: the gov't is strong [the Liberals won]. *Canadian unity is again emphasized, Mitch is affronted and Social Credit weakened. I would have preferred but did not expect a stronger CCF group and a still weaker Conservative group: in fact, a stronger opposition is altogether to be wished. It is splendid Brooke Claxton is elected but I am very sorry Agnes Macphail was defeated.*

The house at Wimbledon was closed. Graham moved back to 20

Chesham Place where he had lived before his marriage. There was still no word on the various jobs for which he had applied, and there was little to do at the oil company. He occupied his time by reading – mainly European history – and going to movies, plays and talks. To Irene he wrote:

> *Here is a bill for the Rideau Club. It is well worth $10 a year to keep that membership up and I would not let it drop for anything: the original entrance fee was $300, so I am protecting a purchase.*
>
> ***
>
> *The C.H.* [Canada House] *job looks like melting away but there is nothing final yet.*
>
> ***
>
> *The coloured movies* [of Robin] *were really marvellous. I want to see them again and again and will exhaust the patience of each Kodak branch in turn.*
>
> ***
>
> *I went to the police station on Gerald Street and signed an application to join the Local Volunteer Defence Corps. … But I wish a decision one way or the other would come from Canada. I want to get into things, I want to see a road home, for a visit and for the future. … Tonight, I am going to hear Sir Stafford at Chatham House on his 45,000 mile trip around the world. Thursday, as a precaution, I am hurrying down to see Dan before he goes away. It will be soon now… How I hate seeing him go, and yet, I wish I were going as he is going.*
>
> ***
>
> *Several batches of papers & the book* 30 Arpents *arrived…*

*

On 24 May 1940 Graham recorded in his diary news of the deepening crisis on the continent:

> *Last night. Was to dine at the RCR mess with Dan. Message came that he would not be there for dinner. I knew what that meant, and checked on it by assuming knowledge with* [Massey], *secured no denial, and caught the first train.*
>
> *The news on the bulletins was anything but cheering. The Germans claimed to be in Boulogne, the papers threw doubt on the claim, but that is enough now to convince the public that it is probably true. The psychological side, in a less stable country, would, I am sure, be already out of control.*
>
> *This news, the atmosphere of Waterloo station, the rush and bustle of troops, however fair the weather, the flowers in the gardens or the green*

of the country seen through the train window, made me frankly depressed. I suppose we are now reaching the stage, the mentality of the Czechs in 1938 – the steady approach, the threat of evil, the feeling of ineffectiveness.

I … hurried to Barrosa barracks. A loaded truck behind the mess confirmed what I had guessed and confirmed the assumptions of my test telephone call.

All the officers, or most of them, with a few of the wives were in the ante-room. The order of dress was battle dress, and the floor was covered with tin hats, gas masks, holsters with revolvers and other kit. There was a cheery atmosphere, but the chatter was subdued. There was a new feeling in the air.

[Dan] *gave me a drink and we talked over things. … We talked about practical things like Betty: if there is an invasion, money for Betty, and how I would hear if he got hit.*

Off he went on some other job. Cec Hollingsworth and Jim H. and I went up to listen to the midnight news. Boulogne has gone. I repeated what I had said to Dan – too late, you people will probably not leave England. Neil H. was inclined to agree.

At 12:30 went down to see the lads march off and get into their trucks. Said goodbye to a bunch of the officers. Trucks on parade ground – dozens of them, and of every kind, Greenline sort of bus, trucks from local grocers, hacks from local draymen and so on – a medley array that did not inspire confidence that equipment was plentiful. … Dan came along. We shook hands. Then, spontaneously we kissed, touching cheeks, his tin hat hit my head with a bump. … "Good bye, good luck. I wish I could come with you. Remember anything I can do in London, ask me to do it." They got into the car, their equipment creaking and scraping. Off they went. "Godspeed," I shouted. … It had been a hard night. I confess to being shaken. I admit that at one point, when I was in the shadows of the barracks, and saw Dan's figure beside his car, and heard his voice muttering orders, something was too much for me. I cried.

Those were the only tears I saw. With one exception. When the last car had disappeared down the roadway … I stood in the roadway with some of the RCR reserve and some 48th and Seaforth lads. Mackstead, an RCR lad, spoke… Said he had been held in Canada when the first bunch came over because he was three weeks under age. He spoke with anger. "I got here yesterday, now they have left me again. They're the grandest lads in the world, there's nothing like the RCR, and they left me again." Each phrase was blurted out in a mounting voice; suddenly, he cried.

On 29 May 1940 he wrote to Irene:

These are awful days, blow after blow is rained upon the consciousness *of the English people, the Channel ports have gone, the BEF* [British Expeditionary Force] *has been cut off from the French, and surrounded, it is being driven into the sea, its last hope killed by the destruction of the left flank through Leopold's treachery. Before this reaches you we will know the worst; the BEF will have been destroyed fighting to the last or its ruins salvaged by escape across the North Sea. Awful days, indeed.*

And there is no attempt to disguise or minimize the seriousness of the position, the government has been frank, the press is clear. Only the dullest person can have failed to learn and to understand that the last three weeks have dealt Britain more serious blows and brought her into greater danger than in any period of her modern history. We are face to face with invasion and invasion from shores that Englishmen can see.

It has been, personally as well as otherwise, a trying week. I cannot tell the story, but perhaps you guessed what happened.

Dan was to go to the scene of battle. I saw him off, and stayed the night with Betty. That was the day the fall of Boulogne occurred. Similar ports were equally closed to British use. I heard Dan and his friends were not so far away, then, that they were back in their old quarters. I saw Dan again Saturday; Sunday, he disappeared; again a cancellation but this time there was no travelling. The papers explain by inference what happened: the lads could not be successfully landed without appalling waste. Thank God, Dan's trip was delayed; otherwise, he would be part of the encircled army. … As Betty said, "this is trying." But she is a brave little girl, and so were all the others with husbands so close to danger, snatched from it, indeed. For as one lad put it, "it's suicidal, but we can do it." Oh, the folly and the fortitude of humanity. I wish I could add the story of a leader's wisdom and fortitude, but letters, even speech, must be silent on this and so many other sides of this last week of war.

I went down to D and B [Dan and Betty] *last night and stayed with them in their flat. They went to a movie and I joined them. Their good spirits are miraculous. We sat up till 12:30 chatting away about the war as if it were an academic subject remote as Alexander's battle of Arbela. Dan is a great lad. He was, by the way, but do not tell Mother, offered a good staff appointment; he turned it down because he wanted to stay with his own men. …*

I hope that you are not too worried by all I have written or what you must read in such fulsome detail in the vast pages of Toronto. It is difficult not to be worried, but there is no use in it. This is a time when we simply have to hang on and grit teeth; my great regret is that I am not allowed to do any more. You would think somewhere I could be found useful. I realize now my instinct last January was the sound guide – I should have taken leave of absence, returned to Canada, got a war job and come back. There, the principal obstacle would not exist, namely,

> *that I am residing in England. But I am glad, in some senses, I am here – for I like to be near Dan at this time, and I can see, if not share in, these vast events.*
>
> *A whole batch of letters and pictures arrived last weekend. I took them down to Farnham with me … showed them about – with the result that all the lads produced similar pictures and we had a great chat about our families.*
>
> *Peggy Crowther and her three children have left for Montreal and home; Maryon Pearson has also gone. It is well, for all its sadness, that you and Robin are in Canada. … Surely it can't be long before I see you both.*

The day before this letter was written, Graham copied into his diary a statement made by George Bernard Shaw:

> *I have found GBS's statement* (Star, *May 23rd) "Now that we are thoroughly frightened we will be alright. Until the English are frightened they never do anything but play cricket and football and hop-scotch and tennis. The Kaiser made the mistake of frightening the English and now Hitler has made the same awful blunder. It was rather a slow process this time… And now Hitler is going to find out what we are like when we are frightened." I hope so. GBS, I take it, is also frightened: he has abandoned his role of professional Irishman and speaks of "we" in a context implying he is also English. That is a slip, indeed.*

The following are all excerpts from letters to Irene:

> *I have heard nothing from Mike. … Home Guarding is not very regular for me. … We do fire watching duty in the country, only, however, when there is an alert. … Is* [Robin] *aggressive enough? Determination I can see, and I am glad he has a technical or mathematical bent, but the use of determination or aggressiveness in his own interests is also desirable in this hard world. If only I could see him. Mother's comment that he is no longer a baby now but a boy really made me feel pathetic – I have missed his babyhood. Yes, I must get home soon.*
>
> ***
>
> *Lloyd Hamilton leaves to-day for the States… I am now the manager of this office and write this from LNH's desk. … I will be appointed a director… I have already been appointed a director of the Associated Ethyl Co. Ltd. … Thurs. I enter the most rarefied zones of the capitalist stratosphere – a director of a world-wide "combine," a director of a Standard Oil Company. What a contrast with the street corners of dear old Queen St. East.*
>
> *All this sounds most imposing… But, in fact, it is the war that is responsible & the office has little of the significance it had: normally, I would not attain nor do I now really qualify for such responsibilities. I am, of course, pleased, and it will please Earl, Henry, John & those who*

helped me up, when politics knocked me out but not down. Fate turns a strange, strange wheel and in such awful days as these one must seize any satisfaction, however peculiar.

***

My most vivid impression of these incredible days is the sense of unreality that embraces all we do, we see, we hear; there seems to be an atmosphere, cold and clear, in which events, experiences, thoughts seem peculiarly suspended. I can make no comparisons; quite inadequate would be the feeling of mixed elation and tension that precedes the gun in a boat race or the gripping of the heart that is felt on gazing from an Alpine peak just climbed; sometimes there is something of the fear, the concentration of emotion, the vividness, the ecstasy, the unbelievableness of male passion at the moment of first joining the fear, emotion, vividness of passion in a woman. These are days of strange, new, significant, absorbing experiences. I do not like them; but I would not miss them. … Yet, aware as we are of this moment in history … we go on [with] *whatever we are doing in a pervading ordinariness. The trains run, the taxis wait, the pubs open; there is breakfast, lunch, dinner; there is shaving and sitting, and rising and sleeping; we hunger and we desire; and today I must get my hair cut or really, why doesn't the damn laundry stop using starch in the underwear that scratches when I walk? If the French fleet is surrendered to the Germans, have these islands a chance? Does this concern me, though I need a hair cut? The invasion of Artois and Picardy has given the German air force two, three, five times the striking power it had when it was based, two hundred miles eastward, in Germany – the German aeroplanes can fly the Channel many times more each day than they can cross the North Sea. Does this mean anything to me when I lie awake and wish I could see my son and embrace … my wife?*

***

[Evan, Irene's brother] *is registered and will be called up shortly.*

***

Dan got his promotion about a week ago… I am delighted; it is something to be a major at 27 in a regular regiment.

A cable, sent in June 1940, recalled happier times: "All love anniversary all regrets Atlantic Ocean."

In July and August there are more entries in Graham's diary:

While standing close to the shelter in Pont Street I heard this story told in very cultivated tones. It proved to be Malcolm Sargent, the musician: "I did love the story of the old lady ordered by the warden to take cover. She protested thus: 'Young man, you leave me alone. I missed the last war because it was fought in foreign countries. I expect to be dead when *the next war comes, and I'm not going to have you prevent me from seeing this one'."*

***

[Churchill's speech] *has exercised immeasurable influence on the public. He uttered exactly what the public feels and wants to hear. ... Bobbie Mason told me that her nurse was with a soldier in a pub near Chester Square and that the crowded rooms remained utterly silent until the last word and then broke into applause. One brave foolish man made an adverse comment; he had to flee for safety leaving his hat and gas mask behind him.*

***

Churchill made another magnificent speech on Tuesday. It was rich in his most eloquent phrases. When he speaks the whole heart of England lifts.

***

The [Home Guard] *uniforms have been issued to our platoon. I am, however, prevented from blossoming forth as a potential hero owing to the unhappy fact that none of our uniforms have any buttons. ... Mrs. Eden is inspecting us in the next few days, and I hope we have buttons by that time.*

*

The following excerpts are taken from a series of letters to Irene, beginning on 23 August:

Will you believe me that I like this London at war? I like it for the same reason that I like the urgency of snow beating on my face in a blizzard. There is something keen, absorbing, yes urgent about the atmosphere.

***

The raids are principally tiresome. They are fatiguing. The row of passengers in a tube train is now just a row of yawns, morning or evening. But everyone is cheerful, magnificently cheerful. The innate good humour of the Saxon is going to stand in good stead. In fact, it is the best munitions Britain produces.

I am now duly appointed sergeant in the Home Guard and must, in very few minutes, run off to Wellington barracks. I have a section of fourteen men – a most varied collection, brokers, a shipping company official, a butler, several medical students, and so on. I also have my uniform – it is not a Sackville street product, but last night I put it all on: tin hat, tunic, rompers, vizor over the eyes, belt and revolver, looked at myself and was quite frightened – like the Duke of Wellington story (I know not what effect these men will have upon the enemy, but by God, sir, they frighten me). I was listening to the Grattan O'Leary *broadcast, suddenly the siren went, and I had to dis-uniform and step down to the shelter. There were two raids last night; I slept (strangely enough) through the second one.*

***

I have seen a plane knocked down, a blazing rocket, over the east of London, seen a parachute drop from the biggest and almost invisible battle at noon on Sunday, seen fires, heard gun fire, bombs, and so on. In fact, I can now claim to have entered this war, but nothing has fallen nearer to me than a few hundred yards. …

One year of the war. Germany has won most of the tricks so far but Britain has the ace of seapower, and it is doubtful if Germany has the king of the air power.

***

There is severe damage, many of our familiar streets are closed, the buildings are ruined, squares we knew around our several homes are pocked with bomb craters, Piccadilly, Regent Street, Cheapside, Ludgate Hill, Holborn, Victoria Street have been closed for a day or so, and this morning, with a stream of wreckage across all approaches to the City along which I tried to move by foot or taxi with intervals in a shelter while the barrage raged and bombs fell, it took me four hours and fifteen minutes to reach the office from Chesham Place. This is the experience of the thousands who work. There has been alarm, in crowded trains stopped underground, there have been tears and collapses, one of our girls arrived crying after five and a half hours in a train standing, but for all this, for all the tragedy and horror around the areas bombed, for all the scenes of carnage and of destruction, this dear old London is brave, calm, good-humoured. How noble, how steady is this people. My heart, my admiration goes out to them, I am proud to be here and among them and doing my little job with them.

I have slept downstairs in a hall for the last week. The barrage for the last two nights has been thundering and sleep has been brief, fitful, yet somehow not inadequate. I do not go down at the first yowl of the siren, that would mean spending more than half of the twenty-four hours in shelters or crowded halls. But when the raiders come close, when the alert whistles change to the alarm, or I hear crashes nearby, I speed below. There, in the flat, I have until last night, had a hallway all to myself, disturbed only by the silly chatter of the women in the adjacent flats who run in and out bleating nonsense to each other, and by the roar and the trembling of the guns. Last night, my hall was shared by a young child-wife and her husband who have moved in because their hotel has a time bomb still unexploded beside it. Their youthfulness was only equalled by their immodesty and their loud ardour. A few mornings ago I slept through the all clear at dawn, and even with the glorious barrage, it is possible to sleep a little.

***

We had our 112th raid (according to my computations) at lunch time; five German bombers suddenly appeared out of the clouds over the Bank and were driven off by gun fire.

In October 1940 Graham and Mike Pearson rented a car to drive to Hereford for a week's holiday, stopping in villages and towns along the way to see the devastation caused by the air raids:

But the only story I vividly recall and must pass on from this journey that began in the late afternoon and ended in rain, blackout and storm, was this: two children went to a cinema, the cinema was bombed. The parents waited distraught while the rescue parties worked in the wreckage. They gave no hope. The parents were assisted to their home. Still no children. About nine they walked in cheerful as larks. The father was coherent enough to ask where they had been. "Oh, Dad, the Odeon was bombed; they gave us our money back when we were pulled out, and we went to another flick." Sandy [Sanderson] *vouches for this as a true story, and I can believe it of any London, any English, children.*

***

The 311th air raid alarm has just sounded.

In November 1940 the oil company office in London was closed, except for one room which was kept mainly for the receipt of mail. About a dozen staff members were moved to a building in Wyck, Gloucestershire. They lived and worked in this building, going home, if they wanted to, on weekends. Graham did not like living in the country; he much preferred being near the action and the potential danger. He stuck a cot in the single room that had been kept in the London office and found a reason to be in London every week or so.

In December the Oxford University Press asked Graham to write a pamphlet on Canada – its geography, economy and races. The draft was sent to Irene for editing. The letters to Irene continued:

It is difficult to believe, but really I miss the war in the country. Of aeroplanes, British and at night German, we have plenty and we can see from our hill top the shellfire, the search-lights, the bomb glares and fires in the west and north… but the liveliness of London is not there and there is no feeling of sitting upon the sharp apex of history.

***

I have scarcely had a moment. … Boilers to stoke in the early morning, wood to chop, someone to take into town for groceries, someone to meet at the train, the dog is ill; would I move this or that; the drains are frozen; or fire wood is needed; or and or and or. … Yet, it is not unpleasant. … I have expressed inadequate thanks for all the presents. The toilet case is admirable, and useful. Twelve tins of tomato juice arrived, *and the two sets of Chinese checkers. This game is the great wartime diversion in Wyck or Chesham Place. … How I yearn to see you and to see Canada: the pamph. has so stirred and whetted my yearning for that happy soil. I play with the idea of leaving but would not think of it until after the invasion effort is over. I would not miss it… In the country, I am on a "curtain" of defence of an aerodrome – my post is by a river and rr. bridge. If the attack comes our way, the orders are to blow up the bridge, delay the enemy, and retire slowly to a second m.g.* [machine gun] *post on our hill. … The local rector is our platoon commander – the one who is more keen on machine guns than gods – and he certainly knows his stuff… But I may not be in the country if anything happens and if I am in the country we are so far inland the happenings may not occur. I wish I could be with Dan's regt. Their job is to drive the invader into the Channel if he gets a footing. … Oxford Press told Canada House that my pamph. was "highly satisfactory"…*

***

London at war without warfare has been, as I have said before, rather dull… Still, it is a boon to have only warnings without bombs and it is a relief for me not to feel for those little people for whom (I say this most seriously) I really suffer at heart so deeply. The sight of small homes and small shops spattered across the street fills me with intolerable anger. … Isn't it outrageous to be separated from much loved but unseen Robin Graham? I hate it, and play and play and play with the idea of a trip home … after the invasion fails.

***

I also regret but also like the raids. As the hall porter said when they started again, "It's more normal-like, isn't it, sir?"

***

I come more and more to the conclusion that I might well return to Canada, keep my connections with the company, but seek out a wartime job that might possibly keep me in Canada after the war. If the war ends, and I am still an oil man, then, so far as I can see, I will remain such and therefore cease alas to be a Canadian.

I would not, as I have said, consider going home before the invasion or invasion scare passed. First of all, if there is to be an invasion, I would not wish to miss that piece of history and experience, whatever the risks.

***

All the houses on both sides of our flat are just heaps of rubble, and the flat itself is a shaken, shattered, windowless, hulk. Our windows, sucked out by blast, hung glassless and twisted, just bent and broken frames. … The shoemakers and all that part of the shops are so much kindling and rubble. … You speak of the strain of London. Bombing is nothing compared with boredom.

***

> *Many letters have recently arrived … some with snaps of Robin. What a lad he is. I send him remote control applause and love. And all love to his Mother.*

These brief excerpts are from letters to Graham's mother, beginning in March 1941:

> *There is no tribute too high to be paid to the ordinary Londonner; they take things as calmly as if bombing raids were rain-storms.*

***

> *I dislike the black out almost more than being bombed; it is a great nuisance. Of course, bombs are also.*

***

> [Frank Coe and I] *have been motoring about England visiting the bombed towns and the ports in the west. Coventry is indeed in a shocking state, so much damage in so small an area, was moving, indeed. But the people walked about their ruined city cheerfully and there were two weddings, one in the ruined cathedral and one in a parish church.*

***

> *If humanity could only be as intelligent as it is courageous.*

In May 1941 Irene cabled Graham that she had been offered a job in Ottawa with the War Time Prices and Trade Board at $3,000 a year, terminable on a month's notice. Graham cabled back: "Strongly believe you should accept. Ask 600 more on principle." His cable the next day added that he believed a "man would have been offered more and you should canvass this." Whether Irene took this advice or not is unknown but she did accept the positon. The *Globe*, the *Ottawa Citizen*, and *Saturday Night* all reported: "Woman Named as Economist." The *Globe* explained that "Mrs. Spry is the second woman economist to be appointed to the Board" and that "Mrs. Phyllis Turner has been its economic advisor … since its formation." Irene and Robin moved to Ottawa and settled into a house on John Street in New Edinburgh. The letters from Graham continued:

> *This has been a miraculous week for letters – I seem to have had six and three of them with photographs. I also had your exciting cable and a box of maple sugar from Mother. This arrived in excellent condition and though I have shared it with the staff and with others, I still have a large supply of this energy creating substance. Yes, as I wrote you, these luxuries are a great help – anything for a change from the drabness of English siege menus. Sugar, cheese, rich shortbread are enormous excitements, but not so great perhaps as hams. I have tasted these rare forgotten things from parcels sent to soldiers.*

***

I had planned to send you a wedding anniversary gift – but the intimate garment I had in mind is now rationed and I fear it cannot be bought without using up most of my 66 coupons! Perhaps, exports are exempt from rationing, but je m'en doute.

***

Despite your love for Toronto, there are many admirable people in Ottawa. You must get to know Norman Robertson and Arnold Heeney well – they are great friends... Then, there is Graham Towers, Bob Coates, and all that gang... the people who know and run Canada.

You appreciate, of course, that every change in financial position, yours or mine, must be notified to the Bank; in any event, if it is not, then the censors copy the information from letters and send it to them. Such is war.

***

I have written to Mike [Pearson had returned to Canada in March 1941]... *He is investigating possibilities for voluntary stepping stone work ... which I could do easily and yet not interfere with my declining labours for the company. He finds, however, a persistent view that I am a dangerous fellow and the powers that be are cautious. ... I wrote Mike I did not want to forego the adjective and that I was glad to share it with half the governments of Britain, New Zealand, etc. And why not? I also mentioned that most of the short term legislation I advocated and so earned the title dangerous is now on the statute books – unemployment insurance, a central bank, a dominion mortgage scheme, managed currency, sanctions, and many aspects of planning.*

***

The long letter with the description of Robin was delicious and the pictures enhanced it. A platinum-gold blond! what a boy. He will, with his blue eyes, smile and hair, be a heart breaker when he grows up and starts going to country clubs.

***

Today I went to Canada House to discuss ways and means of a flying visit homeward.

***

I hope that by the time this letter reaches you the new abode will be settled, Robin pleased with his new surroundings, and you looking forward to your work.

***

Plans for the visit are not proceeding satisfactorily. It is a question of priority and nothing has come through yet to ensure it.

***

> *I cabled you last night that I was broadcasting today. I will be talking to Robert on his birthday! at least his birthday in English time.*

***

> *Isobel C.* [Cripps] *asked me to have Christmas with them all but I had already been asked to come down to the 15th Canadian General – the doctors said they wanted to see one civilian and I accepted. … I will be glad to be with a gang of Canadians for Christmas day, pleasant as it would have been to stay with the Cripps.*
>
> *It is wretched that here is another Christmas and we are still so far away from one another.*

***

> *I am now trying to get a passage home on some ship at the end of January. Air is totally out of the question, it was out of the question before Japan plunged, it will be more so now.*

Graham did not give up his search for a Canadian job, but another opportunity presented itself that satisfied one of his two objectives – to be involved more directly in the war effort. Although he could not foresee it at the time, it soon provided the opportunity for a trip to Canada. On 20 February Graham cabled Irene, "No date departure yet." On 25 February he cabled again:

> *Stafford offering me post as personal assistant and I hope you will agree I accept despite delaying trip probably spring. Choice difficult but it is such a privilege. Job does not mean leaving other responsibilities. Please discuss with Robert and cable.*

On 27 February Graham thanked Irene for permission, adding "Job fascinating luscious being at old game again." The Canadian papers announced: "Graham Spry Assistant to Cripps"; "Canadian Aide to Cripps is Socialist like Chief"; "Appointment of Graham Spry to Important Post." Many of his friends sent messages of congratulation. One said, "So glad you are running the war at last. Heartiest congratulations." Another asked, "Is this from steerage to peerage?" In pencil, on the telegram, Graham replied: "No, from peering to steering." On 5 March Graham cabled Irene: "Job up to all expectations." A week later he wrote:

> *Stafford just called me into his office a little while ago and I am leaving for India in 36 hours with him… You know the risks but this is duty and a great privilege.*

1942-1946

A trip to India; two trips to North America; a war correspondent; another son and a daughter; still unemployable in Canada.

> *Ghandi came in two or three times in a white carriage. Nehru came in and had several meals with us. He was a charming and interesting person. It was a pleasure not only meeting him, but at one breakfast … I identified myself to him as a Canadian, and he … asked me to sit beside him. … He knew quite a lot about Canada. He cross-examined me about the wheat pools.* (Spry Recollections)

In 1939 Sir Stafford Cripps tried unsuccessfully to convince the Labour Party, of which he was an elected member, to form a Popular Front against the Chamberlain government. He was expelled from the party and sat in Parliament as an independent member. Winston Churchill, when he became prime minister in May 1940, sent Cripps to Russia as special envoy and ambassador. On his return eighteen months later, because of his popularity with the people of Britain, he was made leader of the House of Commons, appointed Lord Privy Seal and a member of the war cabinet. It was at this point that Graham joined Cripps's staff, in a voluntary capacity, at 11 Downing Street. The job, which he shared with his friend David Owen, was to prepare replies to letters from the public, draft speeches and summarize articles about the war in foreign newspapers.

With the Japanese advance westward the war cabinet was forced to consider the defence of India, which the Indian people would not discuss until they had a commitment from Britain concerning their eventual independence. A draft declaration was prepared and Cripps was asked to go to India to discuss this declaration and ascertain if it would be acceptable to the many divergent groups which made up the population of that country.

The trip out took several days since the war zone had to be circumvented. Ten people made up the party, which left by flying boat on 14 March 1942 from a seaside resort in the south of England. They remained together as far as Cairo. Cripps's party included David Owen and Graham; the king of Greece, his prime minister and two of their staff; Colonel Butler (a liaison officer); General Spears, who was going to Egypt at Churchill's request to report on war activities in that region; and, a member of the India Office.

The first stop was near Foynes on the west coast of Ireland, where the party dined on unrationed food and refuelled for the trip to Gibraltar. This letter to Irene, dated 6 April from New Delhi, describes the trip:

> *When it was dark, we took off from Shannon and awoke next morning … off Lisbon. … we turned east and landed in the harbour of Gibraltar just after breakfast. More sun, more glorious coast lines, and the dominating rock. We stayed in Gib. one day. I called on the 2nd Canadian Tunnellers and met a number of Toronto and Vancouver lads, lunched with two doctors who were my hosts, drove about the fortifications, put a foot across the frontier barriers into what I like to think was Spain and not the neutral zone, acquired a little sunburn, and rejoiced over blue seas, blue skies, warmth, glitter, and summer. What a feel of its own the Mediterranean has, and how welcome that feel after so hard a winter in dark, blackouted, sunless London.*
>
> *Tangier, Casablanca, an incredible sunset. … high above the sea, we covered, by night, the coast of Africa. We landed in the Gambia river at Bathurst in the dark. … That day, I swam on a red sand beach of Africa in the warm breakers of the Atlantic; the westerlies, I suppose, were blowing. And there was sun and warm wind and the breath of a furnace from the dark rivers and bosom of Africa. I was warned to stay close to the shore, for there were sharks.*
>
> *We … slept in a hospital, were roused as was to be usual, at some terrible hour; took off into the African dark; stopped twenty minutes or so for refueling at sultry, red and sandy and junglish Freetown, cut across the wild bust of Africa, swept along the coast, Takoradi, Accra, and so to Lagos as the tide swept out of the lagoon. One night there … then a dark drive to the airport, and off in a Douglas Lodestar towards Khartoum. … We breakfasted at about 8 or so, in the Residency, and then flew on … to Cairo. It was planned to spend only the night there, but a question of moment delayed S. and we had the next day and night there.* [I] *sat up all night at GHQ cyphering a message to the PM, arrived at the hotel where the others were staying, … caught the bus, entered the flying boat,* Canopus, *crossed Sinai, stopped in Galilee at Tiberias, at* [Habbaniya] *by Baghdad, and ended up for the night in Basrah. More all night cyphering; again departure, from the Euphrates this time, in the dark, breakfast at Bahrein, another stop, Jiwani, and so across the blunt, seer yellow browns of Baluchistan to Karachi. How well I knew that map, every little ridge, every river, from oil exploration days.*
>
> *That … Sunday, 22nd, we stayed in quarantine for yellow fever in a hospital, and left by dark for Gwalior… we landed behind a dam, were driven through sunbaked dusty roads, and the muddled, huddled, maze of Gwalior's bazaars to a land aerodrome. Lemonade in a tent, a blistering wind, and then up into the blue in a Douglas. In an hour, Delhi lay*

> *below us. Here were generals, ADC's, officials, crowds, photographers and galaxies accordingly.*
>
> *And so to the Viceroy's house. It was March 23rd, warm, sunny comforting. Then, the rush began.*
>
> *And here I stop, surprised I have got so far, sorry so little is said, hoping the names alone will excite your envy and imagination.*

On 10 April the Indian leaders rejected the declaration and the mission was over. At the beginning of the return journey, Graham suggested to Cripps that he might be able to perform some useful task if he went on to the United States and Canada. Given the failure of the mission and the inevitable misinformation that was bound to circulate about it, he could perform the function of unofficial ambassador by explaining the difficulties that were encountered; Cripps agreed. A Canadian pilot from Winnipeg was flying an almost empty airplane from Lagos to Baltimore, and Graham was able to embark with him. A cable was sent to Irene and she was at the airport in Baltimore when he landed. Graham was in North America for almost three months, combining both British government and oil company business, before returning to England on 2 July 1942.

Graham's reports to Cripps revealed that the Americans believed Churchill had intended that the Cripps mission would fail:

> *There is a deep-seated suspicion, if not conviction, that at the moment of success, Sir Stafford received new instructions which made an Indian settlement impossible. … Was not the Mission just "bluff" to influence American opinion and was it not sent to India with the full knowledge that it could not succeed?*
>
> ***
>
> *A senior official of the State Department verbally informed the President that the Mission, almost at the moment of success, was "sabotaged" by the intervention of the War Cabinet.*

Graham repeatedly explained that he "had seen every telegram, had read all the documents, and was in Sir Stafford's confidence," and could say with assurance that these interpretations were "nonsense."

On 13 May Graham cabled Cripps, telling him that he had an appointment with President Roosevelt on 15 May. Cripps sent Graham the following cable:

> *Please convey to President, Frankfurter and all others my personal assurance that throughout Indian negotiations I was loyally supported by War Cabinet, Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief. … Breakdown due to impossibility of accepting Congressional demand for full National Government immediately, in view of attitude of the minority communities and the difficulty and delay in making complex constitutional changes in war time.*

On 16 May Graham cabled back:

> *President received me for twenty minutes May 15th and early in interview himself raised substance of point in my telegram … I then quoted terms of your telegram and feel misconception conclusively removed. President in no way indicated if he himself had accepted interpretation but obviously it was on his mind.*

In other American cities Graham gave luncheon speeches to business groups, addressed association meetings and held press conferences. In San Francisco his superiors at the oil company were impressed that one of their employees had travelled to India with Cripps and was representing the British government in America. In Canada he spoke to the Canadian Clubs, visited with many old friends, and met with government officials in Ottawa.

After his return to England on 23 July, Graham wrote to Irene:

> *I have been unable to write. … somehow writing seems to signal that indeed there was an ocean, that the miserable truth was truth again. I cannot match any other fortnight or so for drabness, dullness, dreariness – it was a most dull, apathetic, bereftness and I hated it. I still do. Once again, this impersonal life begins.*
>
> ***
>
> *London is full of Americans now and my unqualified impression is that they are getting along with everyone famously. … They really are a grand looking lot. … And what a success with the girls. The unfortunate underpaid Tommy doesn't get a chance.*
>
> *The only real cause of trouble is the difference in attitude towards negro troops of the British and the Americans. The British are friendly and the girls seem to have no objection. But the American white soldier seeing a negro with a white girl gets all het up, and makes trouble, the southerner especially.*

After the ill-fated raid on Dieppe, Graham sent the following memo to Sir Stafford Cripps:

> *The Prime Minister will perhaps have some brief comment to make in his forthcoming address to the House on the Dieppe raid.*
>
> *It would be, I am sure, of the very greatest benefit to Canadian opinion if he could make quite clear the value and significance of the raid. There is need, I judge, for some such re-assurance, for Canadians inevitably are asking if the heavy casualties that were suffered produced commensurate results.*
>
> *Regiments from Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta were engaged and most of them were practically wiped out. One regiment was the Fusiliers de Mont Royal, a wholly French-Canadian unit*

> *from Montreal. I have heard that only one officer returned. A particular mention – but not too particular, for English-Canadian opinion might not welcome it – of this French-Canadian unit might well help recruiting and other problems in Quebec.*

*

In November 1942 Cripps was dropped from Churchill's war cabinet. He assumed the post of minister of Aircraft Production and Graham followed him: "I am remaining with Stafford and also switching from Mahatmas to heavens." In March Graham was loaned to R.K. Law, minister of State, Foreign Office. The Law Committee was formed at the request of the director general of the Ministry of Information in order to assist the ministry in its responsibilities in the field of British Empire-United States public relations. It sent Graham to the United States in May 1943. His terms of reference were "to make a report on American attitudes, favourable or unfavourable, to Britain and the British Empire."

Irene and Robin spent the first few weeks with Graham when he was in Washington. He toured Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana and Michigan, then spent a few days in Toronto and Ottawa, resting and visiting. The second half of the tour began in Pennsylvania and ended in California, with stops in Ohio, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri and Colorado. Graham met with the press, state leaders, and the heads of various organizations and associations, including Pearl S. Buck, who had founded the East and West Association "to bring about … more mutual understanding between the ordinary people of Asia, Australia and the Americas." In Iowa he addressed the Dallas County agricultural forum on India and Anglo-American relations, while in California he visited the foremost producers of American propaganda: Walt Disney Productions, Twentieth Century-Fox, Paramount Pictures and Universal Studios.

The fall was spent in Ottawa, visiting and gathering background material for his report. In December 1943 Graham flew back to England, leaving Irene, who was expecting their second child, and Robin behind. The following excerpts are taken from letters written after his return to England:

> *I have just sent you and Robin a telegram of Christmas greetings. … London is rather grim, and rather dull. There is so much waiting for buses, for this and for that, and that I have to divide my day often between three offices has its annoyances. And the old enemy the blackout is with us, of course. The people are tired, they are, for all that is said, a bit hungry though goodness knows the food is remarkable given the situation. But nearly everyone I know has had flu and there are all sorts of similar odd little ailments about – Miss Spindlo is ill in hospital, Miss Mann has been ill … and both these girls and those in Stafford's office mentioned going to their doctor about their hair coming out – due, the doctor said, to inadequate fats. The war has certainly taken its price.*

But for us this is a small price. I hear of the greater price so often – this person missing, that killed, and so on.

The raids – frankly, I admit that it was real to have them again – are of no account, I watched four raids these last few nights, two a night. … Yes, from the point of view of being near to the real reality of the times, I am glad to be here, and for the work, too. But for no other reasons. I was terribly lonely – disparate – the first week but I am beginning to feel a little more settled and dug in. But the prospect does not please, and I really must make an effort to belong to some other groups of people than those so closely associated with my work. Nor, comfortable as it is, do I welcome the same old sort of flat; I wish to get into something bigger and bring together all my books. But that is probably hopeless.

Sunday, I called on Betty [Smart] *and the gentleman. I did not like it a bit, I am afraid, but will say nothing of it – cold, dirt, sheer squalor, and a poet of unmistakable selfishness and egotism. …*

I am a little gloomy, yes, but not so much as that, but it is miserable for us to be separated and I will miss cher Robin so much. … could I have some recent snapshots of him?

***

Last Monday I met the great for whom I laboured in the USA. … Never before have I spoken to so many Rt Hons and knights. … and contrary to all my better judgement, I am beginning to think myself an authority though on what, I have no less doubts.

***

I hope this arrives before the great event and brings all my thoughts. I am sorry that I once again cannot be nearby. … George Ferguson is here. … I heard … that Dan's appointment got quite a lot of publicity in the papers as the youngest brigadier in the Canadian army.

***

My early mornings are delighted with bevies of aircraft passing over London. They go over in great clusters of 30 and 40, headed towards France, and make a brave picture. My high window has certainly seen the fortunes of war change – time was when the aircraft were enemy, but now the attack is the other way. Aircraft in clusters against sunlit clouds are the one really unquestionably beautiful product of the industrial revolution.

***

The letters made me feel very far away and alone. I was working out that I had lived in a suitcase for nearly 12 yrs except the months in Cheyne Place and that we had never had a real home, with all our own possessions, at all. All this must be remedied soon.

On 28 February 1944 Irene's friend, Helen Spence, cabled Graham: "Irene and son both splendid. Born February 27. Nearly nine pounds … Congratulations." The new son was named Richard – for Richard Stafford Cripps and Richard K. Law, under whose joint auspices Graham had made the last trip to North America.

On 11 April Graham cabled Irene to tell her that her brother Evan had been killed in action in Italy: "There is nothing that I can say; I wish I were with you. … I can only send love and sympathy and understanding." A few weeks later he added: "I had at last a telegram from Dan. He said Evan and some Americans were hit by bombing. … there was no suffering."

*

By the late spring of 1944 it was becoming apparent that the fighting in Europe could not go on much longer. Graham wanted to see the war first-hand before it was too late and on 11 July he announced:

> *I am now in the Canadian Army – as a War Correspondent. That is how and why I go to Italy – the* Times, *the* Economist, *etc. accredited me.*
>
> ***
>
> *I am travelling light – only a pack, haversack and typewriter. I have a battle-dress for the north and Charlie Hébert's tropical kit for the south. For hat, I have a Khaki beret with a maple leaf badge. … The real job is to see the four or so main Canadian battlefields.*
>
> ***
>
> *We have been "alerted" for departure. … It is really a grand adventure and I am inordinately pleased at last to have some association with the Canadian army in the field.*
>
> ***
>
> *I got into a city from the airport in Italy and by a series of fortunate accidents arrived at a Canadian hotel, the Chateau Frontenac! Then, I got out of my steaming battledress into tropical shorts, etc. and wandered about the town. I dined with a Manitoba doctor and spent the evening talking with a grand group of Canadians, British and an American. Out of this group I got an offer of a motor trip northward to Rome. It was a fascinating tour of the ancient and of the recent battlefields. Then, from one of the ancient hills, we saw the Eternal City embraced in its hills and the dome of St. Peter's rising through the heat haze. I got into another Canadian hotel, by name of Chateau Laurier, ran into friends by the dozens and was taken to two messes. It was like visiting the Canadian cities I had lived in – just one friend after another. A party developed and it was midnight before I got home. Monday, I reported to various offices and found, as I expected, that I would probably have to*

wait round a day or so. I was going to another place but I have now decided to go to see Dan. He has a new and similar outfit, has won the DSO, and it will be both a joy and a useful thing to have a good crack with him. … Dan flourishes but had a two day touch of malaria. … He is enormously well spoken of, both for himself and his work. I hope to get away tomorrow, if not this evening. Hamilton Southam breakfasted with me and I am going to the Sistine chapel with him. … Rome is a relief, a rest, and a joy after London. There is almost no damage except at the outskirts and life here – for the military – is anything but hardship. I have not eaten so much since Ottawa and Washington.

***

Driving through a smashed and ruined town I commented on it to Dan. He said: "I know, I did it." His two commands cover many victories and many ruins. Some of these I have seen and it is not a happy sight. … Cassino, of which you have seen pictures, is a desolation beyond description. At least, I am seeing the old ground and what war means to a people. And I am being filled with more tales of the achievements – and the fun – of the Canadian army far beyond the space to write it. The Canadians are really superb in spirit and good humour and grumbling. My impression – a first and peaceful glance only – is one of sun-tanned men swearing and laughing. I have yet to see among them gloom or grimness. They are in the highest spirits. But oh how they wish to get home!

Dan is doing a marvellous job and everyone speaks of his personal qualities and military ability. … I have basked in the light of his reputation. This and the numerous friends I meet everywhere – dozens and dozens – plus blue skies, sun and the sense of history – ancient and in the making has made this trip a joy. I am bubbling with good health, laughter, friends and new experiences.

***

War is not what one expects. Its most obvious manifestation in Italy is transportation and its corollary road and bridge building. The jeep, the bulldozer and the Bailey bridge are among the hardest fighters of the war and the heavy lorries are winning it. Without these, the handful of those who do the fighting and pay the price could not win. Almost everything geographic favors the defence and the attack depends upon rapid communications and rapid exploitation of success. The tactics of the fighting are varied and complicated but the topography imposes only a few types of battlefield – the river crossing, the assault upon a col between two ridges, and rarely a few miles of open plain where the tanks can have their way. …

Of good humour, even the gaiety of the troops, it is scarcely possible to say enough. The despatch riders plough through the dust looking as white as ghosts and as made up as Pagliacci. But they have a joke to

> *exchange if you stop them to ask the way through the tortuous new roads, and this morning, when infantry was moving forward laden with weapons and whatnot a whole section was roaring at some wise-crack a soldier had made. I have so far seen nothing of the grimness associated with warfare. That is to come no doubt.*
>
> ***
>
> *The picture has quite changed. On Aug. 28, trying to get forward we were caught in what the intelligence officer described as heavy and sustained shelling. I discovered that I could jump remarkable distances and that hugging mother earth was a welcome pastime. We were pinned down and each of the five times we moved Jerry opened up on us. One officer was killed and several lads wounded. At night, back at the billet, we were shelled for another hour or so. Two lads were hit, a shell went through the roof of one wing of the house and further up the road, two of our own unit were badly wounded and a lad they were with killed. We sheltered in a wine cellar. When the shelling moved farther down the slope, there was a short sharp raid by a single aircraft. But yesterday was quiet. … I'll be in London by the time this reaches you. So be not alarmed.*

On 20 September Graham arrived back in London and cabled that he had had a grand trip. There are only a few letters on file between September and December, then this cable dated 24 December: "Merry Christmas to you, Robin and Richard and reunion next year."

*

In April 1945 Graham succeeded once again in getting accreditation as a special correspondent, this time with the *Ottawa Citizen*, to visit the war zone in Belgium, Holland, France and Germany. This letter was written before he left for the continent, on 11 April 1945:

> *With any luck I may get in for the last big event of the war. … The war is, of course, ending, and as I listen late at night to the various broadcasts, I confess to a thrill of triumph; the German station I listened to for years was captured by Dan's lads last Sept; another went on on the same frequency from some other place to the east; and continued to play the best tangos in Europe. A few nights ago … that station also was no longer to be heard. But the BBC was quietly talking away, bombed, besieged, battered over the years, but still calm, and sane and persistent… Even for lucky people like myself it has been a hard war; but we have come through; the dark forces are being blown to the winds, evil is writhing its death throes, and white sheets flutter from every captured German building; the triumph is complete and it is blatantly clear. The superiority could not be greater; a lad back from the front told me that the air superiority was so great that if a despatch rider was reported on a German road, a score of rocket Typhoons would queue up in the chase.*

Soon it will be over; and soon, when it is all over, we'll all start showing symptoms of nervous decline!

***

My tour here is now ending and I return to London shortly. I have motored hundreds of miles in Germany and Holland, days of it, for our place of work is in one place and the various formations of the Canadian army are in others. The result is that to get from here to a forward area, we motor as much as 300 miles in a day. On my first day I went into the Ruhr by one route and returned by another, covering several Canadian battlefields. Since then I have been mainly in the areas east and west of the Ems river in Holland and Germany. ... But it has not been an adventurous tour, or somehow stirring and thrilling as in Italy. Nor have I been shot at; indeed, and alas, I have not really been under fire though I have seen lots of it – not once did the remotest opportunity to jump fearsomely into a ditch arise. I have seen quite a number of regiments, stayed with the Regiment de Chaudière, and with 3rd Div. HQ and seen much of others near or far. And last night some 30 correspondents and officers were taken to a concentration camp, not to see horrors, but to dine and dance with the Polish women's army girls captured in the fall of Warsaw and moved across Germany to the frontier. They were really a remarkable group; and this was the first party they have had after months of imprisonment. And they made it with their Polish songs, dances and a wireless truck which supplied dance music. It broke up early and demurely, for there was almost nothing to drink and quite obviously the girls had been warned about the sort of people Canadians were! But years of Warsaw and months of fighting if only as auxiliaries, followed by imprisonment made them, every one of them, most unusual characters – shy, religious, quiet. ...

All love, to you and to the boys. The little children here are all blondes and very lively. I'll write Robin about them.

***

I was in Paris when the word of the end of the fighting in Holland came and in London for the VE days. Thus, in the last stages of the war, I had the rare good fortune to motor several thousand miles in Belgium, Holland, and Germany, to motor across France – indeed, in several stages, I motored from the outskirts of Bremen [then still occupied] *to Paris. As I came west, the war was dying out, the end was coming and I was with a large group of Canadian officers when the word of the end of the Canadian fighting came. ... There was something very moving about the victory days here. The crowds were gay but orderly, and somehow subdued. Was it really over? There seemed somehow a doubt and there was nothing of the irresponsible enthusiasm of the armistice in 1918. Fun there was – bonfires in Green Park, parades, cheers, streets so thronged that traffic could not move – but it somehow still did not seem true. But from my windows each night I can see London ablaze not with*

> *flames but with flood-lights on Buckingham Palace, upon Nelson, upon the Houses of Parliament, and a single advertisement flickering above Piccadilly Circus.*

On 28 May 1945 Graham cabled Irene that he had concluded his official duties with the British government and was attempting to arrange a trip home. A week later he wrote:

> *I have worked three years and three months and three days for HMG and paid the by no means modest costs that such work imposed on me; and as a favor, I asked that the Ministry "repatriate" me to Canada. There has been a little humming and hawing and a suggestion that it would cost me £150, but that I hope is being dealt with. All being well then, I should get air transport between the 15th and 25th of June either to New York or to Montreal. My plans are these, first, to see you and spend a few days in Ottawa. We can meet wherever I arrive and I will let you know by cable. Two, after a few days in Ottawa, I will go to San Francisco to see the company. … What follows will depend upon the decision made with respect to a future in Ottawa or London, and this will take thorough consideration. So much is to be said in favour of Ottawa – living conditions first of all and Canada; and much for London – but none for living conditions or schools or such. If we settle on Ottawa, then, I shall return to London to wind-up affairs here and cut the painter and let it go. If it is not Ottawa, then we will have to discuss the alternatives a) that I return here and find living and schooling ahead of you and the lads, for it will be an awful problem, or b) that we all return here together and take a chance on getting accommodation. I am keeping on my flat but it would only do at a pinch for four! But all these things we can talk over and none of them are more than thinking aloud… It will be a hard decision. Further, all the above must be confidential for I do not wish to cross wires with the company; and Lloyd is the only one I have told that I am quite interested in the prospect of remaining in Ottawa.*

When Graham was confirmed on a flight he cabled Irene to make her way to New York and to book into the Waldorf Astoria. On 24 June he cabled again. The cable read, simply, "Dinner at eight."

*

The decision was taken that Graham would look for work in Canada. Graham wanted to live in Canada, Irene wanted to continue her studies and her work in economics in Canada, and they both wanted their children to be raised as Canadians. However, Graham did not cut his ties with the oil company. When he visited the head office in San Francisco he was given 120 days paid leave plus sick leave to have a hernia operation. He would use this time to investigate employment opportunities.

There is little documentation of Graham's job search. Most of it took place in Ottawa, amongst his contacts in government and business. There are few letters and no diary notes during this period. He was offered one job in August, by Tommy Douglas's CCF government in Saskatchewan, to be its representative in London. Graham turned it down because he still had hopes of finding work in Canada. In November he tried to create his own job. He wrote to newspapers and to *Maclean's* magazine offering to act as an independent diplomatic correspondent in Ottawa supplying copy on a contractual basis. There was no interest, since the newspapers and magazines had their own reporters in Ottawa able to supply all the copy they needed. In December he summed up his situation in a letter to Daniel, who was still in England:

> *I want to live in Canada, but fate decrees otherwise. … I have tried and tried without result; everything has dried up, first, because firms wish to place their returned lads first, and fear extra commitments which may be hard to carry when and if the depression comes; second, my political past still remains a liability and cause of amusing alarm.*

There was one pleasant turn of events at this time. Irene, because she was the resident and could do so, purchased the Smarts' summer home at Kingsmere.

At the end of December Graham crossed the Atlantic once again. Irene hoped to join him in March or April, a month or so before their third child was expected. The trip was postponed until July, then August, then September, and finally was cancelled altogether. These excerpts are from letters to Irene in January and February 1946:

> *I miss you all terribly; and instead of Robin and Richard rushing in at an early hour of the morning, this morning I was wakened by banging my elbow on a steel file.*

***

> *CBC asked me to broadcast a week from Sunday – the 17th.… The BBC have also asked me to broadcast, in the next few weeks. … I went up to say hello to Betty Smart. We had a beer in a nearby pub and then she suddenly rushed away to meet George. She gave me a copy of her book; it is an extraordinary, brilliant, and courageous document, with some weak spots, of course, but also with some touches of moving language.*

***

> *No word from company and rumours become somewhat discouraging, not only about time but about the sort of work and personnel who are appearing. … Is there nothing I can do in Canada? … It is really absurd that you and I who know Canada so well should have no place there because I nearly ten years ago belonged to an opposition party.*

In April 1946 he wrote:

> *I come more and more to the conclusion, given the dubiousness of the company future, that it is time to get out. I have, of course, taken no*

> *decision, but an official Washington job for HMG is a possibility. … Surely, in the next two months, say by the end of May, something will be clear! Either the company will have come to a decision, and I will know what and where I will be; or HMG will take a decision, with the same result. If not, I am so annoyed with the whole position, its indefiniteness, and unfairness, that I have a good mind just to plunge, that is get up, leave and come home! I won't, of course, but that is the feeling all the situation here – costs, taxation, company planlessness, living difficulties, and the hopelessness of trying to save anything by working here – creates in one's mind.*

***

> *First of all, thanks for the marvellous parcel which arrived last week and which had so many joys in it. The sweets, the chocolate powder, and the kleenex were all most welcome, and the cheese no less. As for the juices, I gaze on them but resist a sudden attack on them and they will be used sparingly.*

***

> *But the BBC, as so often happens with me, gets very eager, calls, takes me to lunch, asks me to do something, and then an iron curtain of silence falls. I often wonder why.*

***

> *There is no further word about the company and the Texas side have not communicated with me. … Oh, to be able to return to Canada to some useful Canadian job!*

In May Irene's father, who had retired in England, died. His death was followed almost immediately by the birth of Elizabeth Anne de Gaspé (known in the family as Lib). Graham wrote:

> *When I came down to the office yesterday morning so soon after speaking to you across the Atlantic, the telegram from Helen telling me that a daughter had arrived, was on my desk; and that you both were well. It was the culmination of a most exciting week. And, after many variations and the day of your father's funeral, so happy a release.*
>
> *I have been in discussion with the Saskatchewan Minister who is here and ascertaining how far that old opportunity is open. In my mind is the search for a job that ultimately gets me back to Canada, provides interesting work now, and at the same time means recurring trips and, of course, a summer holiday in Kingsmere!*

***

> *I am most eager to hear what the latest edition is like – has Miss Spry blonde hair and blue eyes, or is she less like her brothers and more like her darker parents? And is she plump and healthy – and beautiful in present and in prospect? You know my delight in debutantes.*

***

> *I saw the Victory Parade in toto, and arose at 4 o'clock in the morning to get a position where I could see. It was a cold dull day for the most part and I spent the next two days in bed with violent lumbago. I am obviously too old for victory.*

A reorganization at the oil company was completed in May; the new company was called United Overseas Petroleum (Unopet). Graham was offered a minor position as company "greeter," meeting trains and booking flats for visitors to England, with little responsibility or opportunity for promotion. He was disappointed but said nothing for the moment.

In June Graham wrote to David Lewis, telling him of his discussions with the Saskatchewan government and reiterating his goal:

> *I want to return to Canada. For financial reasons and plans, I may well settle here for two or three years or so, but even if I do, I would like to find something that allows me to visit Canada more or less regularly … and to rebuild my connections. … But Canada is my objective – and above all freedom in Canada.*

On 7 July a job offer arrived from the government of Saskatchewan. Graham resigned from the oil company, completed some articles he was writing, and made his way home. He arrived in Ottawa on 11 September 1946.

1946-1957

Agent-general for Saskatchewan; annual trips to Saskatchewan; business and pleasure on the continent.

> *I am quite excited by Saskatchewan and for the first time in years beginning once again to feel "engaged" as one cog is engaged into a machine; a familiar and good machine, Canada, the West, the North.* (Spry to Irene Spry. NAC, Vol. 2-28)

In October 1946 Graham travelled to Saskatchewan to meet officials of the government. It was agreed that he would be agent-general for Saskatchewan in the United Kingdom and continental Europe. He would live in London, be paid a retainer plus costs, and be allowed to seek other contract work.

Graham's task was to recruit capital, industry and people to Saskatchewan as part of Douglas's strategy to build the province. The lesser, and much easier, task was to keep Douglas up-to-date on Labour Party activities in Britain and other socialist political activities in Europe.

Since part of the Saskatchewan government's overall strategy was to encourage shipping through the Hudson Bay route, Graham visited Churchill for eight days at the end of October. The draft notes which would be used for a report on his visit were prefaced by a full page on who he met and what he did. The following paragraph is part of that preface:

> *In Churchill, I spent almost the whole of my time with the Port authorities and much of it in the Port offices, examining data on shipping, marine insurance, port and elevator tariffs, labour problems, ice conditions in the River, Bay, and Straits, logs of ships using the port, finances of the port, rail freight rates, and other information willingly made available to me by the Port authorities. I also met and interviewed officers of the army command, Fort Churchill who drove me in a snowmobile through the tundra and on to the ice in the Bay; Royal Canadian Navy; three local Catholic priests or missionaries; the Mounted Police constable; the senior officer, RCAF; the manager of the hotel; the local rail authorities; an inspector of the Canadian National Telegraphs; two officers of the US Army Air Corps; two communications technicians in the American service; several Canadian or American officers who served*

> *on Muskox or solely American Arctic naval or military exercises; and sundry other persons with information about the region.*

He summarized his conclusions for Norman Robertson, then high commissioner for Canada in London, when he wrote telling him of his new appointment:

> *The appointment is experimental both on their part and upon mine, for neither of us is wholly convinced that there is an adequate field for provincial trade and other representation, particularly in the case of Saskatchewan. Immediately, however, there are a number of subjects which will keep me more than busy and which justify at least an experiment. Among these is the very difficult question of the Hudson Bay route, on the study of which I have spent a great deal of time, and about which I have rather different views from protagonists of the route in Western Canada; but I do go this far with them in believing that present facilities and a very, very limited season might well be used, and that in the long run human ingenuity will find some means of taking richer advantage of the geographical fact that at Churchill the salt sea is one thousand miles nearer the central exporting region of Canada than, for example, Montreal.*

Graham also corresponded with Max Thornburg about another contract job. Thornburg had worked for California Standard Oil before the war, had joined the United States Department of the Secretary of State during the war, and was now an independent consultant. Graham agreed to work with him on the preparation of an economic survey of Turkey for the Twentieth Century Fund. The results of their research would eventually be published under the title *Turkey: An Economic Appraisal*.

*

Graham was in Ottawa for Christmas, in Saskatchewan in January, and back in England by February. He considered these arrangements to be temporary, as he told a friend: "I am quite sure that now is the time to make the change in my work and to start the trek back to Canada, though by a devious route involving another spell in the U.K." He planned to stay in England for three years at most.

On 28 February 1947, when he was settled back into life in London, Graham wrote to Irene:

> *I am typing this at five past five when light and heat are permitted. I am sitting on my divan close to an electric fire and the light is not very good. For the first time in 24 hours I have a little warmth. In bed I wear two prs of socks, flannel pajamas, a sweater, and dressing gown; and in addition to an extra blanket, an eiderdown, and a fancy cover, I also add my overcoat. No matter; I feel as if I were at the foot of a refrigerator rather than at the top of a building. However, there is hot water in the morning and an attempt to use the furnace with coal dust occasionally has produced a little decrease in the cold of the radiators. The first full*

> *day I had here was sunny, yesterday was dull, and today midway between. But there are still flurries of snow and I can see snow on the roof outside my window.*
>
> *Yet I have found myself more than happy seeing old friends and places and in getting things started. I called Norman* [Robertson] *on arrival … and went to lunch with him and with Frederick Hudd. Then I called on the timber rep. to get a sale underway on the first day and went on to the B.C. and Ont. a-g's. … Today I phoned widely, lunched with the Hansards, called to see the Turkish Ambassador and now I am back at the flat – typing with one finger, the rest being split wide open as if friars balsam and doctors never existed. …*
>
> *My hands are too far gone for this to be more than a note, but I must remark that being in London again is almost like not having been away; the milieu produces and reproduces its own habits and here I am in the same old isolated grind, interested in all I have to do, but feeling disparate, uprooted yet at home, and wondering who on earth I can see over the weekend between getting files in order and making up accounts and doing some notes. And out of the window is the crowd I know not, and the chimney pots, the towers, the spires, the bridges, the river I know so well. And on the whole, it is strangely good to be here and London has its kindly (if also clammy) embrace. And the people, scruffy as so many are, are wonderfully good, patient, and good humoured.*
>
> *Yes, it was good to be in* [New York City] *together, very good; and we'll be other places together soon.*

In April 1947 Irene and the three children arrived at Southampton. They found a house at Hastings for the summer months but were unable to find permanent housing and in September the family returned to Ottawa for the winter. Graham made a trip to Saskatchewan and was back in London in November to attend Princess Elizabeth's wedding:

> *Princess Elizabeth and the bridesmaids came in slowly with the King and I saw Elizabeth very well. She struck me as a very nice girl, without any nonsense. Mountbatten, like his pictures, suggests boyish alertness. It was all a very interesting occasion and I am glad I did not miss so much historic symbolism. …*
>
> *I have most mixed feelings about being here, and the interest of such occasions as those above is more than cancelled by the aloneness. … And, so, for the moment, farewell. My love to you and the children. Could not Robin write to me more or less regularly, telling me about his doings; it would be good for his writing and expression. I will reply, and will not forget his interest in stamps. … I miss the three very much; and their Mother.*
>
> ***
>
> *The order-in-council has been held up again, so that financially I simply*

> *do not know where we stand but I am assured there is no difficulty, only the usual delays of governance. Until the order-in-council goes through, there is of course, nothing I can do about the house. …*
>
> *Love and Merry Christmas once more from remote and distressing absence.*

*

In March 1948 Graham wrote to King Gordon, who was now CBC correspondent at the United Nations. Graham had just learned of the death of Gordon's sister, Mary Carver:

> *I am glad my letter found you and to have news of you. We CCF exiles are difficult to keep track of and I was anxious to hear that you had found something useful and interesting. …*
>
> *Stafford, as you say, is bearing the world on his shoulders, he is the decisive and even dominating figure in the cabinet and in the House, and he thrives on it. I see him only occasionally, but I hear from him and have been asked to do various odd things for him. …*
>
> *The government is, I think, more than holding its own, despite the evidence of the Croydon by-election. But it is not a really powerful government and the Labour Party has much to learn still about the position of Britain and of Britain in the world; illusions, bred on many years of street corners, are not easily corrected. The Marshall aid alone can save this country in the next two or three years; without it, there would be vast unemployment for lack of raw materials and food would be worse than it is. … But the international situation overshadows all. I cannot believe that Russia will be so stupid as to provoke the west much further, and with two miracles – western European co-operation and American conscription, surely, the Kremlin will be satisfied with the gains already made. The danger is, of course, that there may be an accident, that over-confidence or bad judgement, based upon doctrinaire interpretations of bad information, may lead Russia one step too far. Any appeasement now would be almost certainly fatal. …*
>
> *And now to the Hudson Bay lunch for Canadian Rhodes scholars, an annual function which I do not recall enjoying in our days. Yesterday, Norman Robertson gave a party for Canadian students at Oxford and Cambridge. There are Canada Clubs at both universities; I addressed the Cambridge club a fortnight ago and have agreed to go to the Oxford club provided I do not make an address. At the Cambridge dinner, the beer consumed at the dinner averaged out at 4.6 pints per head; and then they went to Cochrane's rooms in Trinity where at least an equal quantity was available. The high standards are therefore being maintained; but not by myself; … I begin to grow old as we Russky say.*
>
> *My very best to Ruth. And my very deepest sorrow for your loss. I often think of those days in Florence and was talking about them last week;*

> *superimposed on them is the visit I paid the day Florence was liberated August 10, 1944 and how pleased I was to be in on the liberation. I am glad Mary thought of that vac. and the fun, the deep fun, we had.*

Graham flew to Canada in June 1948 and on 15 July sailed to England with his family on the *Aquitania*. They would move seven times before settling at 28 Chester Street, a house which would serve as both office and residence for the agent-general. It had been severely damaged during the wartime bombing, but the Sprys moved in, amidst the ladders, paint cans and heaps of rubble, on 13 April 1949. In February, Graham described the confusion to his mother:

> *We continue to be swamped with housing and domestic problems generally. We expected to move to a large house, the forthcoming headquarters of the Saskatchewan government in London, but there have been so many legal and financial formalities, I cannot say when we will move. Clifford's Inn, where our office work was done, and where I lived for several years before the family came over, has been abandoned, and we have crowded a typewriter or two and filing cabinets into Allen Street until the new house is ready. … The proposed house is on Chester Street, which runs from Grosvenor Place, (that is the back of Buckingham Palace) to Eaton Place and Belgrave Square. It is a large house with almost twenty rooms, counting the basement rooms. The first two floors will be mainly used for Saskatchewan purposes but we will not describe any one of these rooms as an office. Our help plan – on which freedom turns – is a married couple who will live in, and a Swiss girl … to look after the children.*

By 18 March 1950, when the following letter was written, Graham was able to inform his mother that the situation had improved considerably:

> *I had a very pleasant letter from you a short time ago and Irene had a letter just a few days ago. We are always glad to hear from you and how you are and to give your messages to the three rascals of the family. Apart from the usual colds, the children are well. Elizabeth is a lively, cheerful lady with a keen sense of humour and well able to enjoy herself. Richard, after a little period of maladjustment at his* [first] *school has now been found a Froebel school where he is very happy; he won 21 stars last period and was therefore the leading pupil. Robin has been promoted twice since starting at Westminster and having been launched into French and Latin without any preparation, the other boys having already had some, he is still in process of catching up and this last term instead of coming first as he did a year ago before his promotions, he is about tenth in the class, but rising well as he gets the hang of new subjects. His best subjects last term were history, geography and arithmetic. However, life in a big city and in a house without any garden is rather hard on children and seeing their friends, scattered as they are all over a vast area, is almost a major military operation. However, in the holidays, we have rented a house or rather a flat in a house at*

> *Swanage in Dorset and all except myself will be spending the three weeks of Easter there; and of course the summer holidays of July and August. Irene is well, always busy, and with house purchases – lights, furniture and so on, she has much to do.*
>
> *The house is at last in its final stages of repair, decoration and general rehabilitation. It has been a long ordeal. At times, always, of course, in the cold weather, there was little or no heat, and no hot water. We now have central heating, but as the radiators had to be painted, they have not been turned on and we are still heated with the usual British paraphernalia of gas fires and electric affairs. … It will be a lovely house. The walls downstairs are in light green. All the floors in the rooms will be parquet with rugs. The main hall has white marble with black edges; there is a large, solid front door to which three stone steps lead. There are stone steps all the way up to the fourth floor with an iron balustrade with a wooden, oak or ash, railing. The stairs are about five feet or four feet wide and quite impressive. These will be carpeted. We have a few Canadian paintings and also some water colours of the prairies which will decorate the walls of the hall and the room. We are also spending rather a lot of money on curtains; all in all, I think we will have organized as fine a house for Saskatchewan as any other similar government may have in London. …*
>
> *In the office, we have been very busy these last three months, but less so, these last two weeks. In addition to quite a large correspondence mainly concerned with the export of British goods to Saskatchewan, and to callers, there are of course official functions. Next week, there is a lunch by the High Commissioner to the Governor General, a banquet at the Lord Mayor's, and several other gatherings. Irene is going to Oxford, also, to make a speech; I was invited but turned the job over to her as it was an economic subject. …*
>
> *The children are upstairs playing in their two rooms, and just before I sat down to write this, they unitedly asked me to send their love. Richard just came down to ask me to take him for a walk this afternoon – he likes to go out wearing a kilt I bought when last in Scotland – and he told me he was going to send you a postcard.*

*

In September 1950 Graham gave a radio talk for broadcast in Canada. Bjorn Arnason, to whom Graham reported in Saskatchewan, wrote:

> *I was very much interested in hearing your capital commentary from London yesterday at 12:15 D.S.T. Your talk came over very clearly and I found it most interesting and instructive. I do hope that you will find time to give other reports of a similar nature, as I have no doubt that they will be well received, and it is a matter of considerable pride that the representative of our Province is doing his part in this matter to promote a better understanding of International problems.*

In October Sir Stafford Cripps resigned from politics because of ill health. He stayed in Saskatchewan House before leaving for Switzerland, where he died. Graham wrote Tommy Douglas:

> *He [Cripps] also made me feel particularly pleased with myself by repeating what he had said to me the day I went to see him when he resigned, "You always turn up just at the time when your friendship is needed." You will forgive my pride in this comment but I treasure it.*

On 2 December Graham made his annual trip to Saskatchewan. He wrote to Irene from the ship, from Regina, and from Winnipeg:

> *Parallel with the search for private business is also, of course, the question of the income from & duration of the a.-g. appointment. These issues will have to be clarified & given a fixed shape in my Regina discussions.*
>
> ***
>
> *I think all is well and our position here seems almost too good. Only praise has been heard. But we will not get our full budget; the loss of farm income from frozen wheat is enormous – certainly 35%, perhaps 50 & the health services are, with rising costs, eating up the falling income of the province. At the moment, costs of gov't seem to be 16% above foreseeable revenues. ... A Merry Christmas to my dears...*
>
> ***
>
> *The Regina visit was most satisfactory. ... Crown corporations ... called to see me. Ministers consulted me on all sorts of subjects from trade to fine points of social democratic theory. Even the Liberal newspapers were generous.*

Graham spent Christmas with his mother and his sister and her family in Toronto. He then visited with old friends in Ottawa, including the Pearsons, the Plumptres, the Claxtons, the Robertsons, and his brother Daniel. Graham described his visit to Irene:

> *It is most agreeable and heartening to be in Canada. I feel such a sense of quality, reasonableness and humour in the people from elevator boys in the hotels to the Cabinet Ministers and senior officials sitting about joking and chatting in the red chairs of the Rideau Club. The faces are good faces – the animal look of cupidity and selfish ambition is a rare, rare exception – there is such a decent, and clean and healthy atmosphere even in the centres of power and rivalry. I can't help thinking what a contribution the Canadian universities have made; with Rhodes scholarships & the armed forces giving a travelled sophistication. The Canadian society is mature and solid; it does not fall before strange gods yet quickly, after due examination, opens its mind to new ideas. And there is almost none of the nervousness or bull-dozer-ness of American life. On the present world position, Canadian feeling is calm, reasoned,*

> *and wise. This is a good country with good people and good government. … For all the pleasure of being in Canada, I am very tired of this trip and both dread the further months of travel and the hateful absence from all of you. It is most lonely without les enfants and I am eager for news of them.*

In Graham's next letter, written from Montreal, where he had dinner with Frank and Marian Scott and Hugh MacLennan, he asked Irene to join him in Canada for a few weeks:

> *And how I wish you could fly over here… There is a TCA special return fare of $500.70 London-Montreal. Will you come for 2 weeks? Cable and I'll cable the fare – seriously why not? Believe me, I would be so pleased…*
>
> ***
>
> *I suppose there are many obstacles to your getting away next week & the absence from the children must be the largest. But you do not have many expensive flings.*

Irene raised all the usual protestations – the children, the cost – then told Graham she was on her way. He was very pleased:

> *I really scarcely dared hope that you would come. … This, my dear, this trip is a fling – you and I have too few together as it is and let us then not worry about a few hundred dollars.*

*

There are many letters in the files during the 1951-1957 period regarding invitations to speak or to write articles for various publications. The speeches, on a diversity of topics, were given both in England and in Canada – "North of the Canadian Prairies" to the Royal Empire Society in London; "The Middle East and Oil" to the Canadian Club in Winnipeg; "Oil Development in Saskatchewan" to the Council of British Manufacturers of Petroleum Equipment; "Canadian Economic Development" to the Overseas League; "French Canada" to the National Federation of Women's Institutes; "Canada" to the Royal Naval College; and, "The St. Lawrence Waterway: A Canadian-American Problem" to the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London.

When the Royal Naval College sent Graham a cheque for four guineas as payment for a speech he returned it with a note, saying:

> *I do not wish to be paid for this talk. I, therefore, enclose my cheque for four guineas with the request that you use this to purchase such books as you feel would be useful to your library. You will know what is most required but might I suggest that if you are interested in including some books on Canadian history so much the better. You will be familiar with these but if you would like a short list I would be very glad to send it to you.*

On another occasion Graham was offered a fee of five guineas to speak at a conference. This time he accepted, adding:

> *The fee is no matter. I do not take it myself but put it into a student loan fund to tide Saskatchewan students over temporary difficulties – a sort of revolving arrangement which I am slowly building up.*

The newspaper and magazine articles were also on diverse topics: "Oxford Revisited," for one of the university publications; "The Cripps I Knew," for the *Ottawa Citizen* at the time of Cripps's death; "The Fall of Constantinople, 1453," for the *Middle Eastern Affairs Magazine* marking the 500th anniversary of that event; "Economic Changes in the Canadian Prairie Provinces," for *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*; "The Importance of Canada to the Commonwealth" for the coronation issue of *Overseas*; "The Gift of Tongues," about learning a language from gramophone records, which appeared in the August 1953 issue of *House and Garden* under the pen name Robert Rich. Graham also wrote a radio script on Lord Durham; on 7 July 1952 the *Ottawa Citizen* ran an article entitled "Ottawan Produces Play to be Heard Over BBC," which said "a play on the life of Lord Durham, written by Graham Spry, Agent-General for Saskatchewan, and produced by Rooney Pelletier of Ottawa, will be broadcast by the BBC today."

There are many letters on file to European industrialists, since Saskatchewan was trying to diversify its economy by encouraging foreign investment in the province. This initiative did not amount to much, Saskatchewan's small population being the greatest deterrent. The following letter was sent to bank managers and various industries, along with a copy of a bulletin called the *Saskatchewan Economic Review*:

> *May I also draw your attention to the existence of the Industrial Loan Development Fund of the Government of Saskatchewan. The function of this Fund is to provide loan capital to new industries, up to half of the initial amount required. ... It is perhaps not appreciated that Saskatchewan, with hitherto almost solely a cereal-exporting economy, is now entering a new phase. The basic developments are in metals, uranium, timber and pulpwood, and in chemicals such as sodium sulphate, sodium chloride and potash. There are also abundant and varied ceramic clays, on which several industries in or out of the Province have been established, the latest being an enlarged brick and tile plant at Estevan.*

✱

There are, of course, many letters to Tommy Douglas from this period. While concentrating on Saskatchewan business and issues of mutual interest such as the British Labour Party and politics in general, they also include news of Douglas's daughter Shirley, who was studying drama at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. These letters begin in the summer of 1951:

> *For whatever reason, I am at a very low ebb and have never before felt so lacking in energy. I hope to feel livelier after a holiday. I am taking this, starting next week, in France and Italy, with my two boys. We are setting out with rucksacks, third-class, to have a fortnight on the Mediterranean.*
>
> ***
>
> *Shirley appeared on television last night. Miss Haslam* [a Saskatchewan House employee] *saw her and says that she was simply perfect in the part. She also thought it was a rather difficult part in a rather difficult play, but Shirley came out with flying colours. ...*
>
> *Yesterday was budget day and I had the Financial Editor of the* Manchester Guardian, *who was present at the budget presentation, to dinner after he left the House of Commons. Paul Bareau, Financial Editor of the* Economist *also came in. These men are both what might be called Keynesian Liberals and they regard Butler's budget as politically clever and financially very courageous. Nicholas Kaldor, the Cambridge economist who is a member of the Royal Commission on Taxation, described it as a "Malenkov budget." The other two agreed that Mr. Butler was gambling on a serious peace effort by the Russians. Indeed, it has now become a serious hope here and Mr. Butler apparently assumes that the Russians will relieve tension and thereby lead to an easing of burdens. If this proves accurate, then Mr. Butler's budget may well be a triumph. However, if the Russians sharply return to the Stalinist policy, the view seems to be that a sharp inflation will occur. ...*
>
> *I hope the Session has now ended. From what I can gather from the slow arrival of newspapers and odd comments in letters, you have had a very heavy burden to carry and I hope things are now going to be a little easier.*

The following letter is the last on file from Graham to his mother. It is dated 15 December 1951; Mrs. Spry died in July 1954 at the age of eighty-two:

> *This is to wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, with improving health and as much fun as possible. Irene, Robin, Richard and Libbeth all join in these wishes; and we hope that perhaps not too remote from now we will all be back in Canada again.*
>
> *First news of ourselves. Robin is very much the athlete these days and can scarcely move without taking a ball to play with. He is on his class football team and plays for the under-school. In the summer he plays cricket, and is also on the under-school team. ... He is a large and rugged fellow and growing rapidly in all directions. He does quite well at school and was fourth this last term in his combined work for the term and in examinations. A very good, all round fellow.*
>
> *Richard is equally keen on sports but his interests are also wider; he*

> *started the violin but until he learns to read music better is taking lessons with a recorder, that is a wooden flute; he plays this (not always musically) at all times, much to Robin's distraction. Richie, in fact, is interested in everything; asks (as Robin does) about the Russians and politics, is eager to go on archaeological visits with me, and is reading books himself, as well as the newspapers. … He is also the great debater of the family; his eloquence in arguing against doing something he does not want to do is much persistent and pointed. Richie, in fact, is a bit of a character, with an acute sense of humour; Robin's is more solid and less lively, but quite deep.*
>
> *Libbeth is a character all the way through; she has a surprising command of language and a quizzical turn of phrase, as well as a quizzical and flirtatious smile. She is just learning to read and do figures; both fascinate her. … She is quite a leader, too and does very well at school. She and Richie are both at a Froebel school in Chelsea run by Lady Edwards according to the high and free standards of Irene.*
>
> *Irene is always busy… She is also on several committees, including one examining the Imperial institute and appointed by the Minister of Education in Britain. She is also writing occasional articles, and making speeches here and there outside of London. … She is well, but regrets absence from Canada.*
>
> *We also have our share of official entertainment. We were at the Guildhall when the Lord Mayor gave a lunch for Princess Elizabeth and the Duke on their return from Canada. This was a great occasion; the Hon. Artillery Company turned out in old armour and uniforms, Mr. Churchill spoke, everyone was given a packet of matches in a crested leather folder, the menu was printed most lavishly. We also have been at the Mansion House functions. Last week I went with other Agents General to meet Lord Ismay, the new sec. of state for Commonwealth Affairs. All these have their interest, but pall if there are too many. … We will be here for Christmas, and will not be making any trips; one or two Saskatchewan people alone in London may join us. We wish you were all here and will be thinking of you on Christmas day.*

In April and May 1952 Graham was in Canada. What follow are excerpts from his letters to Irene:

> *The paper has come. Stafford is dead and his suffering is ended. "Nothing is here for tears, nothing to mourn," he had his rich, full, useful life but I think of Isobel.*
>
> ***
>
> *Today – doctors & doctors until 6 pm mainly the Dr. J.A. Brown clinic & the Gen. hospital – the greatest respect for the efforts of Sask. House in this field. Our weary interviews achieve something. … We dabble away in London & wonder how much we accomplish. From here, however, the results are seen. We keep the Ind. Dev. office busy; we fill*

> *critical posts in the professions; we help businesses. For three days, I have been hearing nothing but praise & thanks – & I lap it up.*
>
> ***
>
> *At the Rideau club, I lunched with Rod Finlayson, an old Manitoba friend, now on George Drew's staff. I saw Mike Pearson in his office for a brief general chat & called Norman Robertson, Brooke and various others… I am … meeting Charles Ritchie at 6:30 for a general review of practically everything. … Innis is in the last stages of cancer & may not survive the week. … Underhill is also ill & I could not reach him. Mother is just the same – up and down & her memory gone.*

In February 1954 Graham attended the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) conference in Rome, then left for the United States and Canada. The *Daily Telegraph* reported:

> [Mr. Spry] *is going back to Canada this month for a two-month visit to his own country and the United States.*
>
> *Canada is casting anxious eyes over America's fabulous wheat surplus and its long-term implications for the Canadian market. Saskatchewan is Canada's principal wheat producer.*
>
> *Mr. Spry is going to cross America's wheat-belt to see for himself what is going on.*

On 2 March, from Washington, he wrote to Irene:

> *First, there is a depression here: I am not quoting bankers or statisticians, but my own enormous powers of observation. E.g. 1) For the first time in 10 or 12 years, hotels have rooms to spare & you are welcome. The room is waiting at any hour. 2) Taxis are always available. Today, the driver on the way here said he was carrying half the clients of a few months ago. 3) Dance floors, bars, restaurants, are not crowded even on Sat. nights (I am told). 4) A tip of a quarter to a porter is not snarled at but accepted with thanks. 5) Used cars are a drag on the market & the car lots are filled to the curbs. 6) The talk is – recession but prices are still fantastic. A hotel lunch – 3 courses – costs $5 or $6.00!*

On 4 March Graham left for Ottawa to meet with C.D. Howe, Mitchell Sharp and James Coyne. He took advantage of the occasion to visit with Tom Kent, the CCF group, the Claxtons, the Stevensons, and Walter and Elizabeth Gordon. He then proceeded to Chicago, Winnipeg and Regina:

> *The speech* ["Britain, U.S.A. and Wheat," to the Canadian Club] *in Regina, went over very well.* [Tommy Douglas] *said it was the best review he had heard or read. It is being reprinted verbatim in the* Western Producer *& also being widely circulated in typed copies.*

In the late fall of 1954 Robin came home from school with jaundice; by Christmas Graham was similarly incapacitated. Much to the chagrin of the Saskatchewan students in the United Kingdom and their friends from other parts of Canada, the annual New Year's Eve party had to be cancelled. Graham's jaundice developed into pneumonia and he did not completely recover until late February. On 14 February Tommy Douglas asked Graham to do him a favour:

> *Shirley is opening in the musical comedy "Wonderful Town" in the Princess Theatre, London, on Wednesday, February 23rd. I am enclosing a money order for £3. Would you arrange to have flowers sent to the theatre on opening night with a card marked "from Mother, Joan and Dad."*

Graham sent the flowers and left his sickbed long enough to see the performance; he reported to Douglas that it had been excellent.

During the summer of 1955 Graham and Irene toured France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, and Germany with the children in a secondhand car purchased from the agent-general for British Columbia. In September Graham was back in Canada. He wrote to Irene:

> *Canada makes a thrilling impression of briskness, agreeableness and concentration – everyone seems keen on what they are doing – nothing jaded or cranky.*
>
> ***
>
> *My present plans are to leave here for Rosetown tonight, where I remain Saturday and Sunday with the district Farmers Union; Sunday night and Monday I will be in Saskatoon, Tuesday in Prince Albert, and from Wed. 19th to Tues. 25 in Regina. I leave for Winnipeg on the 25th and spend the 26th in Winnipeg. I have to make a speech to the Manitoba Pool Elevators that evening – their annual banquet of 600 and the subject is wheat. When I will have time to write the speech – a text is wanted in advance – I dare not think. I tried to get out of it, but Tommy said that I would do well to accept; so there it is.*

Throughout the late fall of 1955 and the winter of 1956 Graham's main preoccupation was wheat. Whatever he heard around London or on the continent was passed on to Douglas and, on occasion, to Mitchell Sharp, who was Canada's senior delegate to the wheat conference being held in Geneva in February and March of 1956. Graham attended the conference as an observer and sent daily bulletins to the Saskatchewan government.

In May, just before the announcement of the 20 June election, Graham wrote to Douglas:

> *I have just read your broadcast in the* Leader-Post *on the election programme.*
>
> *During my travels in Saskatchewan last November, one factor, which I know will be very much in your mind, struck me, namely the feelings of the retail merchants. The independent merchant, particularly, has had his troubles and my impression was that they were feeling pretty sorry*

Graham's father, Major-General D.W.B. Spry, c. 1935.

Graham, at three months (25 May 1900), in his mother's arms.

Manitoba Rhodes Scholar for 1922

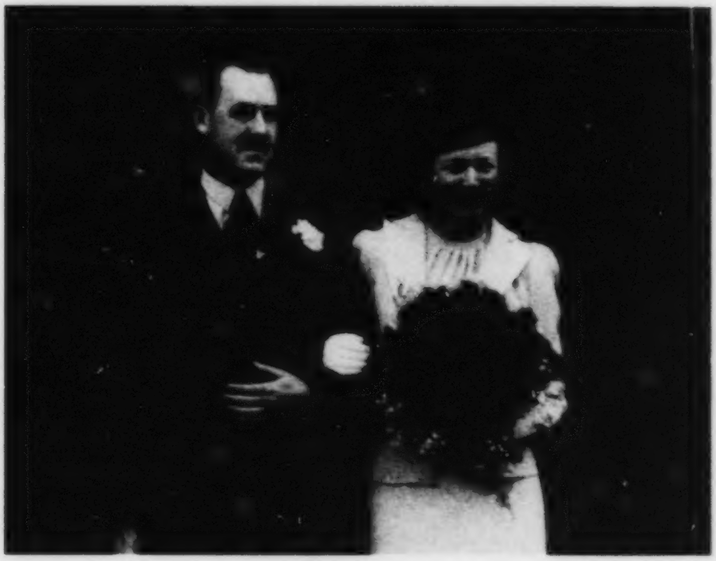
Graham Spry

For several weeks past the students of the University of Manitoba have been conjecturing as to the probable choice of the Rhodes Scholar from this university for 1922. The announcement that this most desired of all Canadian scholarships has been conferred upon Graham Spry has been received throughout the institution by faculty and student body alike with great satisfaction. Mr. Spry is indeed worthy to uphold the fair name of Manitoba along with those who have preceeded him to Oxford, and the "Manitoban" takes this opportunity to express for the student body it represents, the most hearty congratulations and very best wishes.

Perhaps no student has taken a more active part in student activities during the last four years than has Graham Spry. Crowning an illustrious two years at 'Varsity Arts, following the signing of the armistice, he was elected Senior Stick of that faculty for his final year. He has ever been a most zealous supporter and worker on the U.M.S.U. Council, and he won the praise of the whole institution through his capable work in making the "Manitoban" a weekly publication, and also editing it as a daily during the paper shortage of 1920. Mr. Spry has been interested in debating, and has taken several scholarships since entering the university. Last summer he was with the 'Varsity Eight in the Rowing Club Regatta, and for the past two years he has been the Manitoba secretary of the Western Canadian Inter-University Athletic Union. During the war, while still a minor, he was enlisted in the Canadian Field Artillery.

Graham is well known throughout the universities of Canada, and he has many friends in the business circles of Winnipeg, having been connected with the Manitoba Free Press for two years. He is first president as well as charter member of Pi Epsilon Chapter of Zeta Psi Fraternity, and he has always been a true exponent of the fraternity spirit among his brother classmen.

Announcement of Graham's selection as a Rhodes Scholar. Reprinted from the Manitoban, *the University of Manitoba student paper, 1922.*



Graham and Irene (née Biss) on their wedding day, outside the Chelsea Old Church, 30 June 1938.

(Left to right) Major-General Daniel Spry, General A.G.L. McNaughton, Sir Stafford Cripps, and Graham, c. 1943.

(Left to right) Richard, Robin and Elizabeth Spry, c. 1951.

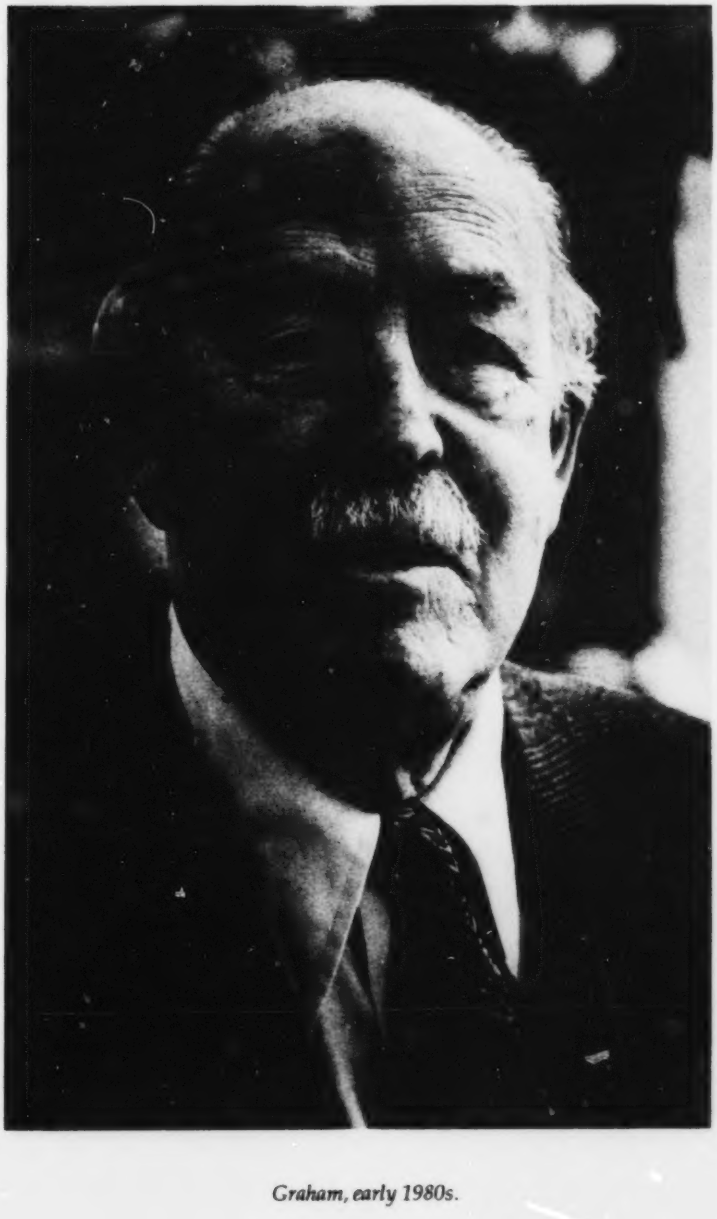
Graham with his first grandchild, Jeremy Spry, 1975.

The Spry summer home at Kingsmere (originally known as "The Barge" but renamed "Shield's Edge" by the Sprys).

The Spry home at 446 Cloverdale Road, Rockcliffe Park, purchased in 1968.

Graham receiving an honorary degree at York University, 1976.

Irene receiving an honorary degree at the University of Toronto, 1971.



Graham, early 1980s.

> *for themselves. In the smaller centres they are, of course, almost the most influential groups and I take the opportunity of suggesting that you keep them in mind and perhaps give them a kind word sometime, if you concur.*
>
> *I have been keeping Dr. Arnason informed on the course of the wheat negotiations and situation. I think the Agreement will be far more of a stabilising factor than the quantities suggest and rather regret the somewhat disappointing press statements made in the West. ... Bulganin and Krushchev have come and gone and the only real controversy aroused was that between the Labour Party and the visitors. Otherwise, the British public received them with courtesy but without any excitement and no particular enthusiasm. Crowds rarely gathered (except in Oxford – the home of lost causes) but as London streets always have plenty of people about, the impression left with the visitors would not be unhappy. ... The only story I have heard about the visit was this: Harry Pollitt, the British communist, was seen in the queue of guests outside Claridges on his way to the Soviet reception in this snootiest of London hotels. A friend of Pollitt's tapped him on the shoulder and said: "Well, Harry, I didn't expect to see you on the way to Claridges. Do you come here often?" Pollitt was heard to reply: "Well, you know, I was thinking about that. The last time I came to Claridges, it was to meet Trotsky."*
>
> *Turning to other matters: Irene and I are now making our plans to arrive in Saskatchewan around the 29th July/1st August. We have our reservations on TCA and plan to go straight to Regina and remain there upwards of a month; then, the family at least will return to Ottawa to have two or three weeks at our summer cottage at Kingsmere. We are enormously looking forward to this visit. Irene seems to have two ambitions; first, to visit all the power stations in Saskatchewan and, second, to get back to her beloved North. ...*
>
> *I hope you are in good fettle for the battle and I can only add that no one who has passed through here has any doubt of what the result will be.*

When in Saskatchewan that summer, Graham gave speeches and press interviews. The *Regina Leader Post* reported:

> *This year looks as if it will be the best yet for the movement of cargoes through the Hudson Bay port of Churchill. ...*
>
> *In discussing emigration to Saskatchewan, Mr. Spry said one-third to one-half the time of his office is spent in filling vacancies, almost all in professional and technical fields and mostly for private companies.*
>
> *"Our job is to interview them, (intending emigrants), on behalf of businesses here, help them through the federal channels and arrange transportation," Mr. Spry said.*

*

On 17 October 1956 Graham wrote the following letter to Douglas:

> *M.J. Coldwell arrives here to-day and will be staying in Saskatchewan House until he leaves for Liverpool en route to Canada.*
>
> *We are taking Mr. Coldwell to a theatre to-night. Tomorrow, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association is giving a small luncheon for him in the House of Commons where he will meet Nye Bevan and Harold Wilson. I have also been invited. In the evening I have asked Dick Crossman, Bob McKenzie and a few others to have dinner here. … Our work here is pretty well dominated by emigration. We are receiving requests for school teachers from local school authorities, for engineers, geologists and other technicians from government departments, and today Weyburn Hospital wrote us to interview a group of a dozen or so nurses, as well as to advertise for male students. There is nothing we can do but act on such requests as these but it is a very time-consuming job and keeps Bill Knights in particular completely swamped.*
>
> *When I am a little better sure of my ground I will write you a letter about the situation in the Middle East. It could be very serious and Russian policy can by no means be minimized. …*
>
> *Another subject about which I wish to write you is the British support now given to the idea of a free trade area in Europe. This will be very slow in its development and like all other European union movements could easily fail. … The Government of Canada has been asked by the United Kingdom to give its views. At first these views I understand were somewhat indefinite. Mr. Robertson, the High Commissioner, is, however, now in Ottawa and I anticipate that the Canadian Government may give reasonably strong support to the principle of a free trade area in Europe but will also state certain conditions.*
>
> *I am simply writing this letter to keep in touch with you and will write you further.*

In July 1957 Canada's new prime minister, John G. Diefenbaker, visited London. Graham gave Douglas his impressions:

> *The purpose of this letter is to say that Mr. Diefenbaker is making a very favourable impression here by his energy and directness. He is, of course, being welcomed in all Conservative circles with enormous rejoicing and to read some of the cheaper newspapers one would think that Canada had not only rejoined the Commonwealth, but was almost going to amalgamate with the United Kingdom. The British Government and its officials have no illusions. They will, however, welcome, not without some reservations, the idea of a Commonwealth Economic Conference, but as one very senior official put it to me who remembered the Ottawa Conference of 1932, "Canada is trying to stir the dead ashes of an old love." … Mr. and Mrs. Diefenbaker received hundreds of guests at Canada House on July 1st, standing for an hour and a half in hot oppressive weather. At dinner that evening Mr. Diefenbaker spoke with force and evangelical fervour to the Canada Club and after the*

> *Canada Club went to Alberta House. … Mr. Diefenbaker's speech as I said, was delivered with great fervour in a manner which made me recall boyhood political speeches heard in western Ontario, or at UFO* [United Farmers of Ontario] *meetings in 1925. I had not heard Mr. Diefenbaker before nor had I met him, and was most interested in his old fashioned wholly unsophisticated style of delivery; it is certainly effective, but Beverley Baxter at the Canada Club Dinner leaned over to a friend of mine and said "Why on earth doesn't someone on his staff tell him how to speak properly?" The fact is that the style is just not the style that London is familiar with, but the force and sincerity make their impression.*
>
> *Of course, a wholly different manner is used in committees, and from three separate sources I have heard most favourable comments on Mr. Diefenbaker's approach or rather, his manner. He has been forceful but modest and has at times flatly said "I simply cannot give a view until I am more familiar with the papers." … Furthermore, he has shown open mindedness and a readiness which Mr. St. Laurent and Mr. C.D. Howe had lost, to take into consideration old or new suggestions and to examine them afresh. I gather that he is very determined to do something about wheat and will look at any suggestions though not any which would weaken the Canadian Wheat Board.*
>
> *On this last point I would mention that his wheat adviser during the campaign was Merril W. Menzies. He is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan in Economics as is also his wife, June. He comes from a farm near Melfort and recently completed a Doctorate Thesis in Saskatchewan House for the London University on the Canadian Wheat Board. Menzies is a strong champion of the Wheat Board and its broad policies. It is significant, I think, that he should now be on Mr. Diefenbaker's staff in Ottawa. …*
>
> *I have avoided talking about the election, all I can say is that public opinion in a democracy like Canada is still a very real and very healthy force. I regarded the Liberal government as a good government in most respects and I am a particular admirer of Mike Pearson, but it is a very good thing that the voters have asserted their power. C.D. Howe's phrase in the pipe line debate "Well, who is going to stop us" could be added to the list of other famous last words.*

Graham, Irene and the three children spent their 1957 summer holiday in Brittany, taking lessons in French twice a day. In November Graham was in Canada and wrote this letter to Irene:

> *I am writing this in Dr. Arnason's office on a typewriter that has rubber lettering from which the lettering has been rubbed; if there are strange examples of English spelling that is the explanation. … On arrival here I seemed to enter into a somewhat wild rush of unplanned and uncontrollable interviews and events. A German arrived on an industrial subject and that took a day. The Premier asked me to go with*

him to Minton the same night Thurs. and we got back to Regina at 2:30 a.m. But it was worth it. Minton is in the sandhills area on the Montana border and the ranchers are mostly German, Swiss, and all other European nationalities. The meeting was preceded by a council gathering about highways and then began a "You tell me meeting" attended by about 100. The rule was that the audience asked and raised any question they wished and said what they wished, with Tommy as answer master. He was superb. So were the people. They were frank, forthright and intelligent. ...

Monday noon I spoke to the Rotary Club. There were about 20 out of 80 people there who had been entertained at Saskatchewan House and I was given a fine welcome. I only used notes and for once the speech went over well. I told them about ... industry, the common market, wheat and everything else, well salted with stories which actually earned laughter. But I did learn that stories about Disraeli must be told slowly and with ample detail; the Rotarians do not rise quickly to the bait of historical references. ...

As to politics, the general view is that a) Mike will get the Liberal leadership and b) that the Tories will win in the spring or summer. ... The politically minded of the Libs and CCF – ordinary members of the public – seem to be of the view that Mike is a miracle of quality but not a miracle of political appeal to the masses. It is said, for example, that he quite fails to project his personality either in meetings of over a handful or over television; he seems rigid even academic and lacking in warmth. This surprises me very much but it is a comment made on several occasions in several places.

1957-1959

Revitalizing the Canadian Radio League; defence of the CBC.

> *Your letter a day or so ago said you did not quite know what I was up to. I am not modest: the CBC and its integrity as a national instrument of east-west communication must go north of the lakes and not south: Canada must have the canoe routes confirmed by ether routes and micro-waves. This is not 1876 or 1885 but it is the same in principle as the CPR and I, if you do not recognize me, am an ether-eal John A – of minor, petty proportions but terribly serious about the job which, after all, I started in 1930.* (Spry to Irene Spry. NAC, Vol. 3-4)

Discussions about revitalizing the CRL began as early as 1953. Frank Underhill was involved, as were Arthur Lower of Queen's University, E.A. Corbett and Roby Kidd of the Adult Education Association, and Pierre Berton of *Maclean's*. Underhill corresponded with Graham about their progress and in October, Graham replied:

> *I am sorry I am delayed in coming to Canada but I am quite sure that my employers will let me spend some days, if that is any use to you, talking over things with … Corbett, Kidd, and Berton, but for goodness sake don't let us start anything which can be dismissed as the idealism of professors and school-teachers, or the horrible radicalism of people like myself.*

There is little more on the subject until 1956. In December 1955 the Fowler Commission was established to "review the CBC's policies in television broadcasting, its finances, the measures necessary to provide an adequate proportion of Canadian programs, and the licensing and control of private stations in the public interest." In September 1956 Graham was in Ottawa and spent a week attending the sessions of the royal commission. He was impressed with Fowler as chairman and hopeful that a good report would be produced, but not at all sure that the government would act on the recommendations. He told Underhill that he had "sounded out the situation in Ottawa and formed a most gloomy impression of what at least the Liberal Party thought about the CBC."

In March 1957 Graham received a copy of the report and in December decided that public support would have to be rallied. On Boxing Day he wrote letters to his brother Daniel, to Davidson Dunton, then president of the CBC, to Eugene Forsey, then head of research at the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), and to Arthur Lower. He also wrote to Tommy Douglas:

> *You will recall the conversation I had in your office on the above subject. I then said I felt a new Canadian Radio League should be set up to counter-balance the influence of the private stations on the new Government and that I would like your permission to take a holiday this New Year in order to revive that organization which in 1932 secured a unanimous vote of the House of Commons for the principle of public service broadcasting.*
>
> *Key persons I saw in Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa (as well as in Saskatchewan) convince me that it is paramount that pro-CBC public opinion be given expression as rapidly as possible. Among the people I saw was the responsible minister, the Hon. George Nowlan. Without going into my reasons, I must say that, uncertain as some of my information must be, it leads to the firm conviction that something like the Canadian Radio League must be revived. I admit I heard contrary views and was assured all would be well. But the most critical information all pointed to the need for early action. I can even say Mr. Nowlan himself concurred.*
>
> *I have already seen some of the old League; I also had conversations with R.M. Fowler and James Stewart of the Royal Commission. I also saw some of the CBC chiefs.*
>
> *The problem has been to find someone with very wide contacts in Ottawa, business, universities and labor and farm organizations to take the initiative. The one possible group, that of E.A. Corbett, Toronto, is defunct and was set up on lines inappropriate to the task in hand at the moment.*
>
> *It is, then, I must unmodestly say, either up to me or nothing will be done.*
>
> *I said to you that I was prepared to take a leave of absence and return to Ottawa to stimulate activity. You replied that a leave of absence was not necessary and that a holiday, leaving me to act on my own responsibility, would be acceptable to you. ... The plans I have in mind are these. I would return to Ottawa late in January. A Radio League group will at once be formed and start sending information to the members of Parliament. I will be the stimulus to the formation of the group but not initially a member of it. The group will have voluntary legal and technical consultants; my status, if anything, will also be a consultant. ... The objective will be the widest possible national agreement on support for the CBC, and a demonstration to the Government and House that the public supports national public service broadcasting. ... Where the finance will come from, I do not know. I will however myself deposit $500, and more if necessary, to enable those who will be starting the League to begin with something. This also will be private, as far as I am*

> *concerned. … The danger to the CBC is not extinction but emasculation and the supremacy of the private stations, leading, as three Royal Commissions and 13 Parliamentary Committees concluded, to the dependence of this vast instrument of national public opinion upon American broadcasting and advertising agencies. To me this result would be disastrous to the national life of Canada and to the freedom of public opinion. Frankly, there is no length to which I would not go, no personal sacrifice I would not make, to forestall such a consequence.*
>
> *I recognize that the request in this letter is a strange one. But I feel it is a necessary one. It gives me no pleasure to be absent from my family and job or to spend money needed for children's education. But I have surveyed the situation in two visits to Canada in 1956 and 1957 and I feel profoundly that some other view than that of the private stations' Ottawa lobby should be expressed strongly if discreetly. This is especially necessary at this moment because the new Government, if there is no election until after March 31st, must take decisive interim or long-term action in the near future. Interim action will almost certainly set the precedent for the long-term policy.*

The letters to the others supplied the same informaton and made a few requests. Daniel was asked if he would rent a post-office box and look for office space, a typewriter and a telephone. Forsey was asked about "machines for duplicating letters and postcards, and volunteers to address envelopes." Professor Lower was asked if he could draft "five or six basic principles." Between 3 and 8 January Graham wrote at least a dozen more letters, all on the subjects of broadcasting and revitalizing the CRL. The following excerpts are typical. To Father Henri St. Denis he wrote:

> *I write to say that since seeing you I met enough people in Canada to ensure that they would initiate the new Canadian Radio League. … Happily, also I have to return to Canada to visit Saskatchewan during the Session of Legislature and I shall take my annual holiday in Ottawa. … I wonder if you could take a look at appendix 4, page 321, volume I of the Royal Commission on Broadcasting. This gives a list of organisations appearing before the Commission. If you have a copy could you tick those French speaking organisations which you know, as well as those which you do not know, that should be approached. The names of the officers of these organisations are not given and we will have to find them out. It is these which we shall wish to become members of the national council. For example, if the Société St. Jean-Baptiste could be interested as well as similar organisations, and of course those representing the Church, it would be enormously important.*

Brooke Claxton was asked to solicit the support of Jack Pickersgill:

> *I have just heard, merely as a passing visitor's gossip, that the Liberal convention may have resolutions unfavorable to the CBC or Fowler Report and that private station interests had been at work on some delegates. This may or may not be true. I hope it is not. It would be*

> *unhappy, if in the present fluid situation … the convention took a position or committed itself against the CBC or the Report.*
>
> *I appreciate you are now out of "politics" but could you not get Jack Pickersgill or some one else appropriate to see that no crystalization of positions occurs?*

Frank Scott at McGill was asked if he could "think up the names of the key French Canadians who might be on the national council."

*

As usual, Graham kept Irene abreast of events; the following letters were written to her during this period. The first is dated 26 January 1958, from aboard the *Queen Mary*; the last was written on 7 March, from Regina:

> *My routine has been restful. … I have read (in bed) all the Fowler Comm. data I had with me – and that is much – and went over my own notes. I am sure of what should be done: the question is who will do it and finance it. But much can be done for very little and will be.*
>
> ***
>
> *I am writing this in the Canadian Federation of Agriculture office just behind the Rideau Club. I propose, if allowed, to use it often for such purposes, and will try to give you, for your edification and my own record, events as they move along.*
>
> *First, the trip. … I rattled in an upper berth from NYC; no reservation had reached NYC from London, and I was lucky to have accommodation at all. I did not stop in Montreal but came straight through. I have a most comfortable and cheap room at the Rideau Club, and of course numerous friends. The first person I ran into was Rod Finlayson, an old Radio Leaguer, and as Dan was not about, he, if you please, signed me into the club. Rod is a back-room boy in the Conservative party organization.*
>
> *Then I lunched with Joe Garner, who also arrived as I did; and after that I sat about with John Stevenson, Ken Greene and a few others. The gossip is that there will be a dissolution announcement this week and that the election day will be Monday, March 31. … It is generally conceded that the Conservatives will win, but those I have spoken to said the chances were better two months ago and nothing like a sweeping victory is so confidently expected. … Mike's first attack in the House as the new leader was a sad failure; and he worried some old Liberal hands. The back-room boys are blamed for the strategy rather than Mike. But all agree that he was no match for the PM in a rough and tumble scrap. There may of course be other views but the red chairs of the Rideau Club are very discerning.*
>
> *On Radio, I have simply tried to find what the situation is. The CBC*

estimates have not been yet adopted, and the ministers are somewhat frightened about them. I had a friend ask a Minister and he gathered that much. On the other hand, the PM, faced with criticisms of the CBC giving Mike too much time came out bluntly and said there would be no interference. Strangely enough, the Liberal caucus also attacked the CBC for "putting Mike on the carpet" and questioning him too severely before the whole TV audience. Out of this double attack, the CBC has come very well. … Now it is five thirty and this office is closing. I'll write as often as possible. It is good about Rob's tutoring – who with? Or is he giving lessons? … I am also glad Richie is rowing; a noble sport! And my best to learned Lib. Love to you all; it is lonely here, but Ottawa has some points.

***

My time, except for a few social forays, is wholly devoted to the job in hand. Social can be dismissed first. I have breakfasted with Walter Gordon and Sandy Nicholson, dined with the John Stevensons, lunched with Ken Greene, Rod Finlayson, Dan, been twice at Brooke's, a cocktail party at John Bird's, and attended the two Alan Plaunt memorial lectures by Jacob Viner. I have also lunched partly on the task in hand with Michael Barkway, mostly about the Common Market, and Donald Manson, former Gen. Man. of CBC. Tonight I go to the Barbeaus, Sunday lunch (on the task) with Margaret Southam and to dinner and the Philharmonic with Hamilton and Jacqueline the 13th; Sunday evening to Eugene Forsey's.

My day begins with a walk, now that the slush has gone and zero or near zero weather with sunshine has happily arrived. I usually make one call during the walk. Then I go to the typewriter and telephone, and in the afternoon or at lunch do some other proselytizing. … Along with this has gone drafting first, a very short statement, second, an intermediate statement, and finally a detailed statement of policy and arranging for printing, as well as sounding out, favorably, sources of money. …

In the Parliamentary Library, I re-read my 60 page submission, printed pages, to the Committee [in 1932]. *It is all there, even to the CBC symphony and the French-Canadian network; and when the CBC was set up in 1936, the League submission by Alan and Brooke repeated and referred to my submission of 1932: little or nothing was added; and Brooke and I worked with Justice drafting the CBC Act. So this is my Canadian job and my heart is dearly in it. I had almost forgotten how many of the things we proposed, thought up, and fought through two Parliaments have come to pass. I feel they are worth defending.*

***

The election promises a Cons. victory but there is less certainty of a sweep. … A new & unpredictable factor is M. Duplessis: while not yet publicly intervening himself his ministers & his machine have been placed wholly behind Diefenbaker.

> ***
>
> *Election predictions remain the same, but Mike has done well with his first campaign speech. Cure unemployment by reducing taxation, pub. works are too slow, is his line: it comes I guess from Tom Kent and Walter Gordon. Incidentally, Mike has told his advt. experts and pub. rels. officers that he is going to be himself and won't be turned into a roaring US senator – the warning was also firmly addressed to Jack Pickersgill. Walter is to be a candidate and is a prospective Min. of Finance or Tr. and Com: in five years however.*
>
> ***
>
> *Somehow I felt a little sorry for Mike: he clearly does not feel at home in political warfare. And (obscured by microphones) his smile and personality did not reach the audience. He earns respect not enthusiasm from his supporters.*

Just before leaving Ottawa in mid-March 1958 Graham was introduced to Landon Williamson, who agreed to be honorary secretary of the CRL. Williamson was working for Dr. J.E. Robbins on the *Encyclopedia Canadiana* but had formerly served on the staff of John Bracken, a Conservative MP and a friend of John Diefenbaker – a connection that Graham thought would serve the CRL well. Graham offered Williamson an honorarium of $1,000 which he agreed to pay from his personal resources or from funds he hoped to raise.

*

The following letters, which are only a small selection of those available in the National Archives, have been chosen because they refer to the major topics and principal issues of concern to Graham. By being so selective, however, one fails to convey a sense of the extraordinary depth to which Graham studied the broadcasting situation in Canada, and the lengths to which he went to ensure that the decision makers were informed of a specific point of view.

The first letter, written to Tommy Douglas on 2 April 1958, is more on the subject of the federal election than on broadcasting:

> *I rose at six this morning, and a few minutes later heard the result of the election, through the BBC as picked up from the CBC. The result completely surprised, even shocked, me. No party is in a healthy position with such an overwhelming majority, and the only comfort I can derive from a Conservative representation of 209 seats is that it is distributed across Canada and it is not based merely on Ontario and British Columbia.*
>
> *The results in Saskatchewan were really quite shattering, above all that M.J.* [Coldwell] *after all his years of service to the Canadian people should have been let down in the seat he has so faithfully represented. I*

had heard when I was in Ottawa, that the Conservatives were very keen to defeat him. This came less from the official Conservative organization than from the Public Relation Boys in Toronto who are paid handsomely to be doctrinaire supporters of free enterprise. The Canadian people have lost a valiant champion and the House of Commons will be sadly poorer for the absence of M.J.

There are of course, innumerable possible interpretations of the causes of this sweeping victory. I am inclined, because of my own special interests, to emphasise the power of the private broadcasting stations. As I moved across Canada, both in the Autumn and in February, I picked up indications that the private stations were going to give every possible advantage to the Conservatives. This can never be proved, but it remained a strong impression with me. When I was in Toronto, I heard for example, that the private interests there were fully confident that they would obtain what they had been seeking, namely a so called supervisory board over the CBC with powers to control CBC networks and indeed, even to deprive the CBC both of part of its income and of its power to function. This indeed, was brought out in the evidence before the Fowler Commission. One might almost guess, and it is no more than a guess, that some sort of a deal was made in Toronto between the private stations and the Conservative organization, at any rate I frequently heard of favours being shown to Mr. Diefenbaker in particular. That could be a misunderstanding for a Prime Minister is entitled to every consideration, but it might also be a policy of winning favour from the Prime Minister for the purposes of the stations themselves. …

What in fact we are developing in Canada is really Congressional Government. What we are losing is Parliamentary Government. We have reached the stage when the leader is the supreme means of winning an election and, when he has won, he is all-powerful for he can claim victory, and through that claim assert complete domination of his Cabinet colleagues and the House of Commons. The forms of the Canadian Government may be those of Britain, but the practices we are developing are those of the American Constitution, but at least the American Constitution provides for a separation of powers and there is conflict between Congress and President. The mixture of American practices in the Canadian Constitution has brought us none of the advantages of the American Constitution and has sacrificed the advantages of the British Constitution.

The enigma of the Conservative Party still daunts me. What is really the motivating force behind that Party, or behind the Prime Minister. Are there any deep seated convictions anywhere in the Party as a Party? … The election results, the size of the majority, turned pretty largely on Quebec. The gain of 41 seats in Quebec is responsible for the overwhelming majority of the Conservative Party. … There is of course a national advantage in having Quebec well represented in the Government at Ottawa, but a representation based on the power of the

> *Duplessis machine is scarcely cheering. Furthermore, Central Canada has now won complete domination of the Canadian scene; Quebec and Ontario together dominate the Conservative Party. ...*
>
> *This is a hasty and dictated letter, and I might have to revise my off-the-cuff judgements. Yet first hasty impressions, even if based on mere totals of election results, perhaps have some value. ... I take some encouragement ... in the knowledge that some of Mr. Diefenbaker's Ministers are excellent people, that their intentions are the best and that they are also men of courage. This gives me the hope that they will not be pushed around, either by special interests or by Central Canada. The composition of the Cabinet when announced, may be some clue to this; and it may also destroy this slight hope that I have expressed.*

On the same day Graham sent a short note to Frank Scott, who had sent him the minutes of the first meeting of a group which had met to discuss the preparation of a new book along the lines of *Social Planning for Canada* (at which David Lewis, Eugene Forsey, Pierre Trudeau and Scott were present). He reminded Scott to include the impact the EEC would have on Canada. Another letter was sent to Eugene Forsey:

> *The danger is a rush decision by the new government. A Parliamentary committee – without the answer prescribed – is the desirable aim, and it should meet in the autumn not this summer. ... The whole subject, I understand, of broadcasting policy will reach the annual meeting of CLC in the form of resolutions. Is there not someone who could really bring out the story of the private stations; their considerable profits and insignificant programmes of Canadian or live origin.*

The next day Graham wrote Merril Menzies in the prime minister's office:

> *I hope then, that the Government will not make a commitment on any particular policy in this field in the speech from the throne. Further, there really should be a Parliamentary Committee, and if anything, it would be better to meet in the Autumn than at once this Spring in order that there be time for Parliament to digest the problem.*

On 9 April, less than a month after his return to London, Graham wrote to Tommy Douglas:

> *This is about broadcasting... Several groups have been formed and there is a secretary ... in Ottawa working in particular with David Kirk, Canadian Federation of Agriculture, Dr. John Robbins, Editor of* Encyclopedia Canadiana, *Father St. Denis, Ottawa University, Professor Donald Creighton, Toronto University, and some thirty or forty others in various parts of Canada. ... The problem is that these excellent people in Ottawa are not entirely familiar with the tactics of a situation like this; nor are their contacts outside the academic circles very wide; nor do they appear to have any channels to the powers-that-be.*

> *I feel, then, that I really should go back to Ottawa to keep an eye on activities, particularly in relation to Parliament and the government.*

On 10 April he again wrote to Merril Menzies:

> *When I sat down to write the memo over Easter weekend, as promised in my letter of the 3rd April, I found I was far too verbose and failed to finish it. … As a result I got out my Monroe calculator and proceeded to work on the tables on which Volume 2 of the Fowler Report is based. This led me into an analysis of the volume of American programming in Canada. I was astonished to discover that private radio stations had almost no live programming except that provided by* CBC *and that their other programming, apart from news and similar announcements, was almost wholly American recordings. I had read this but until I began setting down the figures the real weight did not sink in. Apart from* CBC *live programmes the Canadian audience, TV and Radio, is in fact assimilated to the American.*

Merril replied:

> *I have, I trust, made good use of the ammunition you have so generously supplied. I have already sent a very strong memorandum to the Prime Minister on the subject of national broadcasting policy. … Within 10 minutes of sending the memorandum up to the Prime Minister, Derek Bedson phoned in great enthusiasm about the "brilliant" (!) memorandum on broadcasting policy and assured me that every time the Prime Minister asked for more papers he would send this memorandum in to him again.*

Trans-Canada Airways invited Graham, amongst others, to fly to Vancouver on the pre-inaugural flight of the new London-Vancouver Arctic service. Douglas approved the trip, adding: "In order to forestall any criticism which might arise I think it would be advisable if you were to visit Regina and spend a couple of days here." Between 18 April, when Graham received the news of the free flight, and 15 May, the departure date, he sent out a series of letters. To Frank Scott he wrote:

> *It is very hard saving the soul of Canada. I wrote you on the 20th March, this is the 25th April. Could you not let me know if you received this letter and passed the enclosure on to Professor Jamieson? … I enclose a questionnaire and a stamped and addressed envelope. In accordance with modern methods of higher education, all I require of you is that you tick 'yes' or 'no'.*

Scott replied:

> *We must not forget when the real fight comes we may have an unexpected ally in the Senate. This is one part of Parliament which was not sucked into the whirlpool on March 31st. While it would probably not seek a showdown fight with the House of Commons on this issue, it*

> *might well insist on proper amendments to a Government Bill. We should aim at briefing well a few Senators.*

To George Nowlan, minister of National Revenue (and responsible for the CBC), Graham emphasized the need for a parliamentary committee:

> *The reports in the press that an independent supervisory board will be established lead me to take the liberty of submitting the enclosed notes for your consideration, if you have the time. I do so as one of the doubtless few persons who have read most of the verbatim evidence taken by the Royal Commission.*
>
> *My notes in no way prejudge the policy to be adopted by the Government nor do they suggest it will follow that proposed by the private lobby. It is nevertheless somewhat disturbing that the press assumes a quick decision will be taken and that presumably there will be, therefore, little time for a new Parliament to understand a very complicated issue. I personally dared to hope that there would be a Parliamentary Committee which despite the pressure for TV licenses would allow the Members to inform themselves and public opinion to express itself.*
>
> *I will shortly submit to you an analysis of American programming over Canadian stations.*

Graham wrote to Hazen Argue, then still a member of the CCF, seeking his assistance:

> *I wonder if your secretary would carefully keep any propaganda or other information on broadcasting which you receive, particularly from the Canadian Association of Radio & Television Broadcasters. When I was in Canada a month ago I heard rumours of a new onslaught and would very much like to know what is sent to members of the House.*

Finally, to Mike Pearson, the leader of the Opposition, Graham sent the following, less formal, note:

> *I will be in Ottawa, at the Rideau Club, from May 22nd for a fortnight or so, and hope, despite your manifold tasks, you may find a moment for a chat.*
>
> *In the interim may I utter this thought on broadcasting. The Government may propose either something like Bob Fowler's Board of Broadcast Governors, a satisfactory result, or, as I hear, set up above the CBC Board an "independent supervisory board" as proposed by the private stations' lobby. The second would be a disaster and give the Supervisors Board power to interfere with CBC's national broadcasts, the only national Canadian programmes we have. Indeed, the supervisor would have power to destroy the CBC and would not be responsible to parliament. This was clearly proposed to the Royal Commission … by the private lobby.*

On 13 May Vincent Massey read the Speech from the Throne. Landon Williamson cabled Graham the paragraph on broadcasting policy:

> *There will be placed before you a proposal to establish a new agency to regulate broadcasting in Canada and to ensure that the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the privately owned broadcasting stations work effectively together to constitute a national system to provide satisfactory television and radio services to all Canadians within reach. Related amendments to the radio act will also be proposed. You will be asked to set up a select committee on broadcasting.*

The next day, Graham wrote to Merril Menzies:

> *The text of the reference to broadcasting in the speech from the throne has just been received by cable. It is most re-assuring. … Above all there will* [be] *a parliamentary committee and this will allow time for the members to study and understand a problem on which the chances are they have received information only from one side.*

On 27 May Tommy Douglas received the following letter from Graham, who was in Ottawa at the time:

> *I have had a very busy few days here. I have seen many people in all parties and taken every guidance I could find. Much is in doubt but it is clear, on indications from every source, that the situation is wide open, that final policy is not yet decided upon by the Cabinet and that some action, perhaps a bill, will be introduced fairly shortly.*
>
> *Thus, we must get the Canadian Broadcasting League into public existence and start the battle.*
>
> *My friends in the potential League are excellent people but they do not seem to understand this game or have on Parliament Hill the sort of contacts that are essential. I have seen more key people in three or four days than they have perhaps seen in a month or two. Mike Pearson at once asked me to lunch Monday and is immediately setting up a committee to meet me. Hazen Argue will do the same. The Speaker, whom I met casually, listened to my tale and purely socially asked me to a reception. I have been in even more rarefied circles though I have not yet* [asked] *to see the Minister. And I have seen key newspaper and CBC people, as well as farm and labour. … As to the battle itself, I am not without some hope. The danger is first total ignorance in most of the Cabinet and second both ignorance and interested representation among the back benchers. The responsible minister is both sound and well-informed and the PM is supposed to be sound.*

The next letters, which begin on 1 June 1958, are to Irene:

> *I have had a hectic, lively and on the whole a very successful week since I arrived here the night of the 22nd. For your eyes, if you have the time, and for my own record, I will set down what I have been up to.*

But first Rob. He is working with an engineer who has some large responsibility in constructing a $9 million building on Carling Avenue, not far from the hospital where his sister was born. … It seems to be good experience and excellent introduction to at least civil engineering; this he thinks rather than mechanical may prove to be his line.

He flirts with the idea of buying a camera or a car but receives not too much encouragement on this from pa.

I see him almost every day. He goes back to his cabbagy boarding house off Elgin Street, bathes, eats the meal there and then alone or with Fish [John Fry, a friend of Robin's] *comes along with me to have another meal! This is very agreeable and in many ways I have seen more of him here and had more real chat and contact with him than I did when he was at home, but always busy. Yesterday, I rented a Tilden car, took the two up to Kingsmere, lunched with Jean and Ann Goodeve, ran into Dan and Betty, and then took the two lads to a movie – a western plus a Lollobrigida, the first was not bad, the second would have been better with more music and less bosom. Rob, by the way, made just this criticism. … Rob, by the way (if you have noticed it!) is a fine lad, and deeply thoughtful; sound as a bell. It is wonderful to see him often and to have him, for once, begin to ask me about things. He has been up to the House of Commons twice or so and shows interest in what is going on. …*

Next week, the material will start rolling out and the artillery will be heard under the name of the Canadian Broadcasting League. I drafted a statement, it is in type, and 1,000 copies will go out this week, say Wednesday or Thursday. The Government, indeed the PM's office, has been informed of this in advance and we are basing our approach on an endorsement of the Speech from the Throne. Thus we start out and hope to continue in agreement with and support of the Government.

The number of people I have seen is legion. Rod Finlayson, on the PM's staff, Derek Bedson, the PM's secretary, Merril, Nowlan the Minister, … Bob Bryce, briefly but significantly, Davie Dunton, but he is almost completely isolated and unhappily not in high favour in the PM's office, a long telephone chat with Bob Fowler, a long, frank lunch with Mike Pearson; a few words with Rolly Michener (and a highly useful invitation to a reception where I met several people and had a long chat with the Minister of Agriculture)…

The Canadian Association of Broadcasters is split three or four ways. One group of private stations accepts the Fowler Report… the most intelligent of them, Finlay MacDonald of Halifax … sent me messages of friendliness through an intermediary, and in reply to a telegram I sent him, replied most cordially that he was ready to see me in Toronto or Ottawa. He is an intimate of George Nowlan and has been the lingering coal of Conservatism in Nova Scotia for years; and now that it has burst *into flame he is very powerful in the party. … All in all I am most encouraged. The risks are not small; Clifford Sifton will doubtless turn his papers against us. But I think, in the week, I have opened up here the channels I need and that the week plus previous visits and correspondence have established informal relations of trust. I wish you were here, all of you, for the fun.*

***

The League has many friends, but very few real helpers… In the result, I have been doing almost everything – writing everything, working with the printers, seeing ministers and officials, folding letters, stapling duplicated statements, and so on. The only breaks from all this have been the later evenings with Robin and either a Saturday evening or Sunday with him. … The key figure on our side among the private stations is Finlay MacDonald, manager of station CJCH, Halifax. … He arrived in Ottawa on the 12th and attended a meeting of the … CAB. I spent two or three hours with him that night and six hours with him, David Kirk of CFA, and several other private station managers last night.

He is, this Finlay M., rather a James Stewart (movie) type, a very loyal Catholic, a graduate of St. François Xavier, the central figure for years in the Maritimes Conservative organization, and a most liberal, open-minded, sophisticated character. David Kirk described him as a "real Canadian who had the modernity of a reader of the New Yorker.*" He is most outspoken and has had his rows with Arthur Lower and … Corbett. But he knows the Canadian problem, both national and broadcasting, most fully. Endorsed by the minister we have most to do with, he can be a great help. He is ready to act as a consultant or become a member of the League or assist in any other way we may choose. At the same time, he is a member of the much divided CAB, the private association, and freely tells me of what happens in their meetings.*

***

On Friday morning, Davie Dunton resigned and on July 16 will become President of Carleton University. The secret has been perfectly kept; not a hint of it leaked out, though I did hear that a "high official" had been considered for the job. The advantage is all on the University's side; he will be excellent. … [Alphonse Ouimet replaced Davidson Dunton as CBC president.]

***

I have just come from a whole afternoon in the House of Commons, first listening to a silly debate dragged out by the CCF and then to a motion … moved by Mike Pearson on broadcasting. Mike handed out the milk of the gospel. He telephoned me highly secretly on Friday and said the Liberals had to move the motion and proposed to read into the record all *the past attacks made on the CBC by the Members of the Government and Tory party.*

I begged him to change the whole tone of the approach and to recognize that we were making strides; and further that dragging up the past might only confirm the Government in sins of the present. My urging was a statesmanlike approach and an opportunity for "national agreement on national policy." Mike said he would go back to his people and take that line. I waited half an hour and phoned him back pressing my point. He said he would do all he could.

So far he has. The press gallery lads think I initiated the speech but this is of course absurd. All I did, if the speeches continue as started, was to change the tone and to keep the doors open for agreement. I was most amused to look down from the gallery and see on members' desks, copies of our bulletins and cards. ...

This weekend is a complete contrast with the last. The news of Davie Dunton's resignation that Friday really reduced me to inertia and alarm, and I had scarcely really got back to work on Monday. But Tuesday morning, wakened by the early dawn and the Canada bird in the trees by the East block – singing Canada, Canada, Canada – I gritted my teeth, went out and rented an office, some furniture, and a telephone... From that moment, everything seems to have changed. First, I got word that the Prime Minister would receive our delegation on the 18th – his secretary Bedson ... was prompt and cordial; I am to lunch with him this week.

Next, several people volunteered help and George Gordon Lennox with his French wife turned up from Saskatoon ready to sit in the office. The same Tuesday, $1,000 arrived from the Sask. Wheat Pool and $70 [in] *other donations in the mail.*

On top of this Merril, when I saw him, rose from his chair in his office, and said that while he was not finally certain he thought he could congratulate me on winning the battle. That has been the report from all quarters consistently the past week and today even the Canadian Press man on this subject said he expected a board on the Fowler report basis.

And Friday Mike phoned me. So the pendulum swings. It may swing back but this is sure: we have made a powerful impression, we have probably changed the Government's mind and strengthened the hands of our friends in the Cabinet, and we may really carry the day. If we do, it will be three victories – 1932, 1936, and 1958. But it is not yet certain.

***

The Min. [Nowlan] *asked me to call at 3 pm & I was with him until 3.45. He showed me & read the bill. It, a) will set up a 15-man board of Broadcast Gover. b) a CBC board c) sustain the concept of a single* *system d) the financial provisions were not clear to me and I did not like the sound of them – i.e., procedures. But victory is mostly ours!*

***

I can go home. It has been my battle & I am allowing myself to be proud that as much was accomplished on such slim resources. … I will see you & Rich & Lib then in 48 hours or more. And how eager I am for that reunion. I will need much love and much ease for I am a weary warrior; and the fight has been a lonely one. … The bill is a compromise – a Diefenbaker compromise – but from my point of view, the saving, so far, of the CBC is the vital, immediate result.

On 2 September 1958 Graham provided Bjorn Arnason, deputy minister for the Saskatchewan Department of Co-operation, with this overview from London:

> *I cabled the Premier that I had at last returned to London and asked for a copy to be given to you. It is something of a relief to be back on the job and to escape from the intense day and night activities, or worse, waiting on decisions on Parliament Hill. Into these I will not go now.*
>
> *I set out to try to save the new government from making the mistake of interfering with the CBC. All I can say is that the CBC continues as it was before, less its regulatory powers and, in that sense at least, a defensive battle was won but I have the gravest doubts about other aspects of the legislation and I am convinced that those in the government hostile to the CBC gained powerful opportunities to interfere with and even drastically weaken the CBC. However, of this I can be sure – if I had not acted and revived the Canadian Broadcasting League, the legislation would certainly have been worse. …*
>
> *I am not fully back into the swing of the office but let me say at once that the annual report has been worked on and that you will have both this and the budget promptly. … Immigration has dominated the activities of the office followed closely by the constant stream of visitors. … The number of visitors from Saskatchewan has been at least as high as in the past years and the office or Mrs. Spry have done everything possible for them; indeed, Saskatchewan visitors plus various committees have kept Irene busy solidly during the summer and she has only now left for a holiday near Oxford. …*
>
> *All my expenses in Ottawa were, of course, met by myself; indeed, I not only met these personal expenses but spent much money on the Broadcasting League and at one time I found myself committed to printing and other expenses running to several thousand dollars. It was a question of either taking this risk or not getting the work done. Happily, however, as the Broadcasting League took shape, support began to come in and most of the heavier obligations which I had incurred were taken over by the League.*

Graham gave Bobby Dyde, Alan Plaunt's widow, much the same news, adding:

> *Rob leaves for Oxford to-day and will occupy my old rooms in Durham building, University College. I am diverted that the College should go to such sentimental lengths. Richie is at Westminster also headed for engineering, but Rob is very much on the Arts side.*

In another letter to Arnason, Graham reported that Irene

> *has completed a study of Palliser for the Provincial Archives, and is contributing a survey of his work to the* Journal of the Royal Geographical Society. ... *She is also very busy as the representative of the Women's Institutes of Canada on the World Council of the Associated Country Women of the World.*

When Landon Williamson wrote to tell Graham that the Canadian Broadcasting League (CBL) executive committee had put forward seven names for the Board of Broadcast Governors (BBG), including Walter Gordon and Davidson Dunton, Graham noted on the letter: "All eastern & all but one academic – more Fr. Ca. & Caths. – labour farmers."

The BBG and the CBC board were announced in early November. Graham wrote to many people asking for their views, and gave his to Finlay Payne at the CBC:

> *My first impression of the appointments to the two Boards is a happy one. I only know about half of them. These for the main part give me great confidence. Of course I am glad to see that three of the Canadian Broadcasting League have been appointed; Eugene Forsey, Prof. W.L. Morton, and Mrs. C.T. Armstrong. They were, as you know, very real supporters and not just names.*

Graham sent a similar letter to Brooke Claxton:

> *I have just received full biographical details of the broadcasting appointments. I see now one or two which arouse my suspicion but otherwise I think one should be grateful that the Boards are so representative.*

Neither Claxton (now chairman of the Canada Council) nor Bob Fowler were as enthusiastic as Graham about the appointments. Claxton stated: "some of the appointments to the two boards are certainly first class, but I would think that there were more dedicated supporters of the private interest than of the public system." Fowler said that he was not at all happy about either the legislation or the caliber of the new appointments, but conceded that it could have been worse but for Graham's vigorous activity over the past year.

Eugene Forsey provided Graham with information about the BBG and how the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) was behaving towards it, and sought Graham's advice on many of the issues before the BBG. On 15 January Forsey wrote to Graham:

> *The meeting of the Executive Committee was highly interesting. I discovered, just after it was over, that one member of the Board is toying with the idea that the CBC should get out of sound broadcasting altogether and confine itself to TV! He is not, apparently, contemplating this for the immediate future, but as a long-range objective. You will be interested to know that both the Chairman and I sat heavily on the idea, and I think with some effect.*
>
> *Another member of the Board who had already given hints of his attitude towards the CBC, went overboard completely during the meetings in a most violent, vitriolic, malevolent denunciation of the CBC performance on the French network, on the score of expense. He clearly thought it was our business to tackle this thing immediately and head on. I sat very firmly on him, and I have reason to believe that the Chairman was not ill-pleased that I did so.*
>
> *It is perfectly evident, however, that I am going to have to be johnny on the spot every moment to keep some people from doing infinite mischief. I am favourably impressed by the Chairman's performance, and by one of the other members of the Executive Committee. Still another member of the Executive Committee strikes me as pompous and not very bright.*

In February 1959 Graham was in France and Germany meeting with industrial leaders, while in early March he was in Zurich at the wheat conference. At the end of March he sailed back to Canada. The next two letters are to Irene. The first is from Regina:

> *This typewriter lacks a backspacer and some other urgent parts but the results, even so, will probably be better than my handwriting. ... There is a whine, the western, biting whine, of the wind sweeping across the prairie. The farmers do not like it: it is drying away the sparse moisture and last Monday, there was a duststorm which shrouded the sun and turns day to night. On Tuesday, I arrived from Toronto an hour late against a wind blowing at 50 mph from the west. But since then it has been warm and sunny and the sunsets have been superb.*
>
> ***
>
> *You can tell Richie that maple syrup has been bought and paid for; your diary's mate I have yet to find and a simple can opener was also not on offer at Frieman's or Ogilvie's, but I'll try again Monday. ... I go by train to Montreal around four, have dinner with Frank Scott and leave at 10 for NYC – one day in NYC and so to the ship and London.*
>
> *The ship cannot take me home too fast. I have felt most alone and deprived this trip and have nearly been tempted to fly back. I will be eager to see you at Southampton and, as I wrote before, if the disembarkation means a terribly late arrival in London, perhaps we should stay in Southampton until the next day. I leave that to your judgement when the time of the ship's arrival is known. If Lib is free to come, splendid –*

> *but if the time of arrival is late perhaps you alone should come? Cunard may be able to let you aboard. If so my cabin number is M 159. …*
>
> *And with that, now to writing notes for the CBL. I hope my query about sizes allowed of a reply to New York in time – at least I will try to find something of interest for my two ladies.*

A broadcasting committee was established in May 1959. On 15 June Finlay Payne wrote to Graham:

> *This is an SOS. We're in trouble and we need intercession from our friends to those in high places to "call off the inquisitors." When you read the Broadcasting Committee Hansard you'll see what I mean. The Committee hearings have been one continuous barrage of questions most of them petty, reflecting personal prejudices. From our point of view, very little of the information they are seeking will be of any help in writing a meaningful Report to the House. In short many of the Committee members don't want information they want an excuse to make the CBC look ridiculous; to sustain their own and their friends' image of the Corporation as an inefficient, clumsy waster of public funds. Frankly, this is in part our fault because our case has not been put with the vigour, clarity and decisiveness it could have in other circumstances. You know the reason for this as well as I do. None of us can remember when we've had such a continuously bad press.*

Graham had already written to Landon Williamson at the CBL before receiving Payne's letter:

> *I have been reading very brief detail summaries of what has been going on at the Committee and I wish the League could do something through Mr. Nowlan or other channels, to have the CBC protected from what appear to be witch hunts by such members as Art Smith, Calgary.*

After hearing from Payne, Graham immediately wrote to several other people. One was Professor W.L. Morton, a professor of history at the University of Manitoba and a member of the CBC board of directors:

> *The burden, then, of this letter, because of the injury being done to the CBC by some members of the Parliamentary Committee and the difficulties within the CBC, is to express the hope to you personally that the Board of Directors may more adequately perform their functions of giving leadership to the CBC and of acting as a buffer both between the CBC and the Government and the CBC and its voracious private enemies. The board may have already taken steps to these ends in which case this letter is mistaken. But so far as the Press is any evidence the conclusion to be drawn is that the voluntary members of the Board have so far left the CBC to the mercy of its critics or enemies and failed to give public support to the permanent members of the Board or CBC management. After all, it is the voluntary members alone who are in the position both to know the problems and policies of the CBC and disinterestedly to explain them to the public.*

Of Finlay MacDonald, Graham asked:

> *Could you give me any guidance on the real purposes of the Parliamentary Committee now sitting in Ottawa on the subject of broadcasting? I have read the Minutes of the first nine sessions... Goodness knows, the CBC has got itself into sufficient trouble and does not need much assistance from its enemies, but I am startled that there are no friends in the Committee to give the CBC a little help.*

Mike Pearson's aid was also solicited:

> *I have read the Minutes of the first nine days of the Special Committee on Broadcasting. ... This Committee, in my opinion, comes close to being a straight witch-hunt. ... You know my prejudice about the CBC and will therefore forgive me in encroaching on your attention. The CBC is, I judge, in trouble. Some of it is due to its own administrative and structural weaknesses. But there are other factors and these are not very pleasing.*

Finally, Graham sought help from Eugene Forsey:

> *You really should say something to your friends amongst the ministers about the political disadvantage of letting the CBC be slaughtered by its enemies in the Parliamentary Committee, or to commit suicide because of its own mistakes and mistaken leadership. ... Another aspect of the recent controversies is the slowness of the Canadian Labour Congress and the Broadcasting Unions. ... While the CBC was being noisely drawn and quartered, and at the same time stabbing itself nearer to the heart, Labour seems to have been as silent as a cemetery. Is this as it should be?*

Bill Morton's response suggested that the CBC board had spoken: "The Board, either directly or by implication, defied political interference on three major matters – not just one – repudiated the criticism of the CBC and, I would hope, gave its enemies pause." Finlay MacDonald, while stating that his "support for the CBC remains constant," added, "but I am inclined to the view that they are going through a period in which their answers are much weaker than the questions are hostile." Mike Pearson told Graham that he hoped to make a speech in the House of Commons on "the threat to the whole system of control of public broadcasting in Canada" and added, "If there is anything you can send me about your own views on these matters ... I would be very glad to have it and, of course, would use it in a manner not to involve you in any way." Eugene Forsey replied to Graham's specific concern, then went on to discuss the BBG:

> *I have asked Davie Fulton to lunch with me shortly to discuss, among other things, the question of the Government's position on this whole matter of broadcasting. I don't know whether he will, but I hope so. I am going to try some other friends in the Cabinet also. I am, like you,*

> *perfectly sure that this business has done the Liberals a lot of good. In the middle of the row, I had a long interview with the Prime Minister's Secretary, and talked to him like a Dutch uncle on the subject, emphasizing precisely this point. I hope it got back to the proper quarter. If necessary, after I have seen some other people in the Cabinet, or, having tried, have failed to see them, I shall try to see the Prime Minister himself and talk to* him *like a Dutch uncle. …*
>
> *I wish I had more confidence in my own ability and backbone. Andy Stewart is an excellent Chairman; but if he has a fault, it is a tendency to be overcautious, overmodest and overpatient; and my reputation for being the opposite on all three points makes me an ineffective critic of any such shortcomings. However, I think the Board is, on the whole, a good Board and an independent Board. …*
>
> *I am inclined to think that somebody should now start a strong counterattack against these miserable private broadcasters. Perhaps I can get one of the Officers of the Congress to make a speech on the subject. My own tendency would be to launch a violent demand that the whole lot should be nationalized. They are for the most part a collection of bandits, and in the* Canadian Broadcaster *of July 9th they have done an editorial which shows their hand more thoroughly and damnably than ever before (to the best of my knowledge). They are really, in general, a terrible crew; and this is the opinion of one of the most conservative of my colleagues, who denounced them in the most unmeasured terms to me, though I was unable to persuade him to say the same to the Chairman and to the full Board.*

The broadcasting committee recessed on 10 July and produced an interim report. Graham wrote to Merril Menzies:

> *The Parliamentary Committee was a disaster, certainly for the Government and perhaps for the CBC. I say for the Government because I am sure the Liberals wanted exactly the display of hostility which this padded and ignorant Committee fully met. I am not sure it will be a disaster for the CBC unless the Committee Report, a most stupid and contradictory document, receives any attention.*
>
> *I have read all 20 of the Minutes of the proceedings. Pickersgill's political manoeuvring ran circles around the Government members. I was, for example, fascinated to note that it was he at the end of the Committee meetings who kept pressing for a report. He, of course, knew full well the temper of the Committee and the lack of information of the Chairman and Vice Chairman. The Committee fully played into the Liberals' hands and the Liberals will make the most possible capital out of it.*

*

Robin went to Grenoble for the summer of 1959 to study French, as did Lib for the month of July. In August Graham and Richard joined them there, spending a few days together before Richard, Lib and Graham continued on to Geneva. Richard and Lib then flew home while Graham remained to do some business for Saskatchewan House. In the meantime, Irene had been appointed as chair of the executive committee of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW). On 21 August Graham wrote, congratulating her:

> *I hope you have heard from Lib and Rich that with Rob for some of the time we enjoyed a marvellous few days of travel, sunshine, laughter, fun and mountains in or near Grenoble: and, alas without Rob, a less but still agreeable stay in Geneva. They are a fine triad, these people and great companions, quick in humour, and quite startlingly well-informed about the world. Rob's French seemed quite ready and fluent, Richie reads with some real appreciation and Lib is quite capable of getting, in French, what she wants. I think the travelling added to their knowledge and self-confidence. … Congratulations (if somewhat alarmed congratulations) on your new role as what Richie calls "chairman of the world." It will be a useful job. But I hope you will have good helpers and will not let your sense of duty overwhelm you – or us!*

1959-1962

More broadcasting; the doctors' strike in Saskatchewan; medicare.

> *I can assure you that my views favour a pre-paid universal Medical Care Insurance Scheme. However, I did not want Saskatchewan House as such to become the centre of propaganda against any group in the Province, but whether we succeeded in keeping our skirts clean is a matter of doubt.* (Spry to Bjorn Arnason. NAC, Vol. 11-10)

Graham's correspondence from August 1959 to the end of 1960 continued to be mostly about broadcasting, but the focus shifted somewhat from the problems at the CBC to the Canadian-content regulations for television announced by the BBG, and the call for applications for a second television service. The hearings on the television regulations were scheduled for 2-3 November 1959; the hearings on a second service were held in January 1960. The broadcasting committee was not reestablished until July 1960.

On 30 July 1959 Eugene Forsey sent Graham a copy of the television regulations with this note:

> *There are already signs of a furious storm from "the industry" and its journalistic yappers over our announcement. The* Globe and Mail *this morning has a particularly furious (and stupid) editorial, which I trust will have the salutary* [effect] *of further stiffening the Board's back.*

Graham wrote many letters to Andrew Stewart, chairman of the BBG, and frequently included reports about broadcasting in Britain. This letter concerned the regulations:

> *I received this morning from one of my correspondents, a copy of the proposed TV Regulations. ... I would like to congratulate you on the courage of your decision to require a Canadian content of 55% and two hours of reserved time. I have received cuttings from the Toronto* Globe *and a few other newspapers. Clearly the pressure of the campaigns against the CBC will now be transferred towards you and your Board.*

Graham did not fail to solicit the advice of others. To J.R. Kidd, at the Canadian Association for Adult Education, he wrote: "I would be most interested to hear what your views are on the problems of Canadian broadcasting." To Henri St. Denis at the University of Ottawa he wrote:

> *I have been thinking, as I have no doubt you have, a great deal about Canadian broadcasting, and I am increasingly convinced that if the CBC is both to be maintained and reformed both the Catholic Church and the most thoughtful elements in French Canada will have to play a very serious part. As I see it there will need to be quite a battle both between CBC and private interests, and between the BBG and the private interests opposed to the proposed Regulation requiring 55% Canadian programmes and reserved time of two hours in the evening. ... Would you please turn this over in your mind?*

In reply to a similar letter, Walter Gordon wrote to Graham on 7 August:

> *I do not think there is much doubt the Tories are out to wreck the CBC. They are helped by the fact that it seems to have been incredibly badly managed since Davie Dunton left and Ouimet's illness. It is being attacked from all directions by the Tories in Ottawa, by Leslie Frost here and, of course, by the business interests and the press who are after the television licences in Toronto and the other principal cities. The CBC has considerable support in the outlying areas and among the saner members of the press. The latter are handicapped, however, by the CBC's bad management. I do hope that as things begin to clarify, Mike and his supporters will have a real issue on which to fight but the Tories are very strong and should not be underestimated.*

In October Forsey wrote to Graham, telling him that he thought it "imperative that the Canadian Broadcasting League should put in a powerful memorandum at the hearings the beginning of next month." Forsey offered Graham $250 towards his air fare if he would come over for the hearings, but Graham was occupied with Saskatchewan business and could not leave London. However, Graham succeeded in having the CBL well represented at the hearings. Graham replied:

> *I am writing Creighton urgently today and ... I will write various women and religious organisations, to get them to induce David Kirk and the League people in Ottawa, to take some action. ... Let me quickly add that the private stations are going to fight the Regulations tooth and nail, though some of them will take a very reasonable line. Strangely enough I have read one of the submissions to be made by a private interest.*
>
> *The Board has to stand firm on its Regulations. I recognise their difficulty and know how the private stations will suffer but the Board is either going to carry out the Act, or it is not going to carry out the Act; a beginning must be made somewhere.*

To Merril Menzies Graham wrote:

> *Donald Creighton will present to the Board of Broadcast Governors on November 2nd, a brief on behalf of the Canadian Broadcasting League.*

> *He will be supported by a group representing a number of national organisations in the League.*
>
> *I had suggested that, at the same time, two or three from the League might ask for an appointment with the Prime Minister but the League felt that this was unwise. However, it just strikes me that the Prime Minister might be glad to have a word with Professor Creighton, provided the Prime Minister was in town and not more than usually overwhelmed. At any rate I mention this all to you.*

Menzies replied a week later:

> *I have written Prof. Creighton informing him that I had tentatively arranged an appointment for him with the Prime Minister on November 2nd. … I have made it a practice to send relevant articles by Professor Creighton to the Prime Minister with a note drawing the necessary national and political moral. These articles, it seems to me, must have some effect on one with as highly developed a political sense as the Prime Minister.*

In February 1960 Graham wrote to the chairman of the broadcasting committee, G.E. Halpenny, asking for permission to appear once the committee was reestablished. He sent a copy of his letter to Nowlan, adding:

> *Mr. Halpenny and members of the Committee may of course respond to my letter with the questions "what does a resident of England know about Canada, and what does he know about Canadian broadcasting?" The questions are not inappropriate. To the first I would answer that I am a Canadian of several generations and that I have been across Canada from coast to coast or more recently across six or eight provinces at least once, if not two or three times almost every year, except three of the war years, since 1926. To the second question I can only answer that I have been a student of the subject for thirty years and have no axe, commercial or partisan, to grind. I appreciate that any invitation to appear before the Committee is a matter entirely for their own decision. But you were kind enough to suggest when I met you that I should let you know when I was writing Mr. Halpenny. I am hoping this means that you might put forward a word in my favour to Mr. Halpenny and the Committee.*

Nowlan replied:

> *When the Broadcasting Committee is again constituted it will again have to elect its Chairman. In all probability it will re-elect Mr. Halpenny and I propose to speak to him concerning your letter. … You know, of course, that I personally would welcome your appearance before the Committee and will so advise the new Chairman.*

When Graham asked Senator G.S. Thorvaldson to put in a good word for him, Thorvaldson's first response was positive:

> *Mr. Halpenny ... is a good friend of mine and I propose to see him today or tomorrow and talk to him about the subject matter of your letter. I think that I can assure you now that Mr. Halpenny will welcome you as a witness before the Committee.*
>
> *When you arrive in Ottawa I would like very much if you would call me or drop in at my office in the Centre Block.*

A day later, he appeared to have had a change of heart:

> *I quite agree with the suggestion contained in your letter to me that Halpenny certainly has been labouring under the impression that you had an axe to grind in regard to broadcasting in Canada. In fact, I had quite some difficulty in arguing the opposite point of view. ... Perhaps, therefore, I was somewhat too optimistic in the tone of my letter to you of yesterday's date.*

Graham wrote to many others, asking them to urge his appearance. However, the new chairman, Louis Fortin, decided first to defer any consideration of the issues until the next session of Parliament and then decided not to allow Graham to appear. In March Graham travelled to Saskatchewan with a group of European industrialists to look at investment opportunities in the province, and stopped in Montreal to attend the BBG hearings on applications for a private television station. In April he was back in London and wrote to Austin Weir:

> *The Spry family will be in Canada for some seven weeks this summer, partly in the West and partly at our place in Kingsmere. ...*
>
> *I have also been raising the idea with a number of people across Canada of a small private informal gathering to discuss the Canadian broadcasting situation.*
>
> *Professor Lower was here, I have been writing the French-Canadian group and, of course, David Kirk in the CBL in Ottawa. I hope you can come to such a gathering if we can get a good group to meet.*
>
> *Between Royal Weddings, Prime Ministers' conferences and spies in the sky, we have had a rather interesting three weeks. We enormously enjoyed being at the wedding in the Abbey. If you followed the television broadcast with care and great rapidity you might have noticed I appeared to the extent of the area of my knees to my nose though I was somewhat obscured by the large turban of a Yoruba chief from Africa. Through the many functions of the PMs' Conference I met Mr. Diefenbaker seven or eight times and had several conversations with him. I also had about an hour or so with him at Buckingham Palace owing to the fact that he became separated from George Drew and the other Canadians who were eagerly searching for him in order to present him to the Queen. ... He variously called me Graham or General but the following day, at a party he gave, I brought my brother along and was able to explain that there were two of us.*

On 29 May Forsey sent a hurried note to Graham:

> *I need hardly say I am greatly pleased and relieved by the Edmonton decision* [the BBG gave the licence to CBC]. *Ouimet did a superb job: "e'en the ranks of Tuscany could scarce forbear to cheer." We had some lively discussions in the Board, in which I expressed myself strongly, but I hope temperately, and certainly briefly. At least three others spoke in the same sense but better and at greater length. One was a man who told me afterwards he'd come intending to vote for private enterprise, but had been convinced by the CBC presentation. You'd be surprised at who one of my allies was: you might also be surprised at who some of the opposition were. One powerful opponent (probable) was, happily, not present.*

Graham passed on the compliment about Ouimet to Finlay Payne of the CBC:

> *I heard the good news about Edmonton through the CBC short wave service over here. I have since heard from Edmonton that Mr. Ouimet made a first class presentation of the case and palpably influenced some of the uncertain members of the BBG.*

To Arthur Lower at Queen's Graham wrote:

> *I gather from one of my sources that it would be a very useful thing if you and a few others wrote a letter to the Board of Broadcast Governors congratulating them on the decision awarding CBC the licence in Edmonton. I gather that the Board needs a little encouragement, at any rate I am informed that almost no comment of any kind appears to have reached the Board since the decision was taken.*

*

In 1960 Tommy Douglas won what was to be his last election as premier of Saskatchewan. He wrote to Graham on 14 June:

> *Thanks very much for your letter which I greatly appreciated receiving. It was wonderful to hear from you and to have the good wishes of Irene and yourself on the eve of our election.*
>
> *It was probably the hardest fought campaign we have had to date. We were up against not only three well financed political parties but also a campaign of distortion by the medical profession that went far beyond anything I have ever seen. When one thinks that we did not have behind us either the press or any powerful group the result is little short of a political miracle. The outcome justified my faith that when great issues are at stake the ordinary citizen will rise to the occasion and is not quite as gullible as some of the public relations experts seem to think.*

A week later Graham wrote back:

> *I was at a social gathering of London University professors etc. all of*

> *Labour sympathies and Bob McKenzie was present. There was a long discussion about the results of the Saskatchewan election and, while you may not like direct compliments, the conclusion of this group was that you were now the undoubted senior among the leaders of social democratic parties in the western world today. … I entirely concur with your statement that you demonstrated that public relations experts need not run the world. This fact proven by the results of the Saskatchewan election is enormously heartening.*
>
> *Irene and I are making plans for visiting Canada. She is flying direct on July 13th with Robin to British Columbia to visit Women's Institutes, to dig into some information about Captain John Palliser and to study with the aid of Dal Grauer the power situation in British Columbia which she has been following. … I leave London with Elizabeth on the 22nd and fly straight to Regina. … Richard is rowing at Henley and comes out alone to Regina on August 2nd.*

During the fall of 1960 the *Queen's Quarterly* published an article of Graham's on broadcasting (which he distributed to all MP's, 100 newspaper editors and many others). He appeared before the committee on broadcasting in the United Kingdom and in December came back to Canada to appear before the Royal Commission on Publications.

On a sadder note, the passage of time was becoming apparent. In June 1960 Brooke Claxton, one of Graham's oldest and dearest friends, died at the age of sixty-one.

*

On 7 March 1961 Graham wrote to Eugene Forsey about the state of broadcasting in Canada:

> *From this distance, but with information coming in to me from many sources, I come more and more to the conclusion that a whole new look at the situation is necessary and that the Act is going to work out wholly to the advantage of the private stations. They already have a much bigger audience in toto than the CBC and their total income is now greater, but … they are spending* very little *on live programming. Fortunes are to be made by simply using canned programmes in peak hours and relying for Canadian content on what the CBC supplies. In a long term the use of CBC programmes will decline and at some point there will be enormous pressure on the BBG to water down its Canadian content regulations.*

Forsey thanked Graham for his "admonitions" and "gloomy predictions," adding:

> *They will help to keep me, and indirectly all of us, up to scratch. I think the outlook is nothing like as pessimistic as you suggest. However, I must admit that I feel increasingly doubtful about whether I should ever have gone on the Board at all, or should stay on it now. The job requires*

> *far more time than I ever expected, and as a result of various developments in the Congress, I have even less time than I expected to spend on it. It also requires a great deal more physical and nervous energy, and a great deal more knowledge, than I possess or have any prospect of acquiring; ditto for force of character. … I'm afraid you must feel about me much as Florence Nightingale felt about most of the people she had to deal with. I have just been reading Cecil Woodham-Smith's biography. Her most pungent remark on the subject is, "What would Jesus have done if He had had to work through Pontius Pilate?"*

A few weeks later Forsey told Graham that the CBC was applying for a licence to provide television service in French in Quebec, and said, "I shall have my eye on it, and shall apply myself diligently to it. If it goes wrong, this may be the occasion for me to get out. I think I was an idiot ever to get in, as I am quite unequal to the duties."

Graham replied quickly to Forsey's first letter, then wrote again a few days later:

> *I had no intention of being alarmist. … I am sorry I have caused you concern. The BBG is one of the two hopes of Canadian broadcasting and within the Act has done very well indeed. You are a tower of strength to the Board and that is everyone's view. I will write you further. … You are carrying many burdens. Do not take them too heavily.*
>
> ***
>
> *It looks as if I would not appear before the Parliamentary committee. I will have to make my arrangements and if the chance perhaps arises, I will do what I can. However, if not to be heard here, I mention that I have been invited to California, Illinois, New York, – and France, to discuss the Canadian situation: a prophet etc.*

*

On 24 January 1961 the *Globe and Mail* reported that: "Premier T.C. Douglas of Saskatchewan has let it be known that he is willing – if asked – to lead the New Party which is being formed by the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Canadian Labour Congress; and which will come into official existence next summer." This would mark the birth of the New Democratic Party (NDP). Graham wrote to Douglas in April:

> *From the grapevine I hear that you have practically decided to accept the leadership of the New Party. From the point of view of Saskatchewan I have to confess my feelings are mixed. Two things do strike me: first, will the policy of the New Party be determined before or after you accept the leadership? I have heard from various quarters that some extraordinary policies have been put forward. Second, will the finance be fully adequate to give you a chance and at the same time not make you dependent on one or two particular sources?*
>
> *These questions are none of my business but they do concern me very*

much, entirely from the point of view of the need of Canada for some new approach to her problems and some revivifying of political life. Your Government in Saskatchewan has been almost the only inspiration of progressive thought in Canada. If this can be carried into the national field, all well and good, but on your terms, I would hope, and not on the terms of some group in the New Party which might have funds. … But this is a long subject and certainly not one for an Agent-General, though I know you will understand my interest.

Douglas replied:

Thanks very much for your letter of April 25th telling me that you will probably be in Regina during the first week in June. We are all looking forward to seeing you at that time in order to hear first-hand your impressions arising out of your visit to Washington and Ottawa.

I am glad you met Ross Thatcher [the Liberal leader in Saskatchewan] *and his wife and that you have them launched on their tour. After prorogation Thatcher announced that he was completely exhausted from the work of the Session and planned to spend six weeks in the United Kingdom and Europe taking a much needed rest.*

If a comparatively quiet and uneventful Session tired him out I shudder to think what some hard work would do. In Ottawa while on his way overseas Thatcher also said he might endeavour to bring back some industries to the province so you may be called upon to help him pack them in his luggage!

Graham wrote back:

I am leaving on Saturday for Washington where I will remain three days with Geoffrey Wilson, Treasury Officer at the British Embassy, who was formerly head of the Colombo Plan and worked with Sir Stafford Cripps. From Washington on the 17th I go to Corning, New York until around the 24/25th when I go to Ottawa and thence Regina. … I have just received a long 2 page cable from Mike Pearson who wants me to address the Liberal Caucus on this subject [broadcasting] *when I pass through Ottawa. … I propose to accept the invitation and to reveal all I know. Parallel with this, however, I propose to see the Hon. George Nowlan and put some views before him. All this will be tricky but as I am sure you appreciate the organized drive against the CBC has to be fought. I will tell you much more of this when I am in Regina.*

In July 1961 Eugene Forsey told Graham that "The New Party paragraph on broadcasting is dreadful gruel." Graham was asked, and agreed, to rewrite the party policy on broadcasting. Forsey attended the founding convention and reported to Graham:

Yours of July 26 arrived just before the Convention. I had duly passed on your first draft, without giving the source. I likewise passed on the second. … I went to the Convention as a delegate, a reluctant one. It

> *was, for me, a horror. Some publicity expert in Toronto had dreamed up a proposal for a* Guaranteed Employment Act, *and, despite my protests and arguments, before the Convention opened, and from the floor, this was adopted! Coldwell and Douglas both told me they agreed it was nonsense. … Such irresponsibility frightens me almost stiff. We in the old* CCF *never handed our programmes over to Madison Avenue boys.*
>
> *This was not by any means the worst, however. A small group of* F.-C. [French-Canadian] *nationalists (reliably reported to be about 25% of the* F.-C. *delegation) set to work to have the party deny that Canada was a nation, and affirm that it was a "bi-national state," made up of two nations, the* F.-C. *nation and the* E.-C. *nation. They didn't get* all *they wanted, but they got most of it (notably the excision of "national" wherever it appeared in the draft constitution), and old Brockelbank, for the constitution committee, conceded everything when he said they were removing "national" because they had "discovered" that "nation" and "national" in French meant something different from what they did in English, and that our using them to refer to the whole of Canada "wounded" and "insulted" the* F.-C.s*! … MacDonald fought this hard in the National (pardon me!) Committee, but got almost* no *support. I, almost alone, protested and fought on the Convention floor (once in French, twice in English) … but it was carried by a large majority. … A by-product of all this is to make me ineligible for membership in the party. Members must "accept the constitution of the party." I can't accept a constitution from which the Convention has deliberately removed the word "national," on the grounds stated by Brockelbank, and in about half the 20-odd places where it occurred, replaced it by* nothing, *not even that blessed Yankee importation "federal." I am now a man without a party.*

In October 1961, after a special meeting of the legislative committee in Saskatchewan, Tommy Douglas left for the federal field. He was succeeded by Woodrow Lloyd.

*

In February 1962 Graham wrote a long letter to Lady Wylie of Oxford, whom he had known for years, and whose husband, Sir Francis Wylie, had been secretary to the Rhodes Trust and warden of Rhodes House:

> *Your always kind letter or card of birthday greetings arrived here when I was in Geneva. Allow me to reply on my typewriter using not the touch system but what that remote movie star Wallie Reid called "the hunter plus the solar system" of one finger and a jab.*
>
> *I went to Geneva to take a quick look at the International Wheat Conference and now leave for southern Spain partly to do some writing and partly to get some sun, exercise and treatment for that fashionable malady, disc trouble, annoying but not serious. As I am leaving on*

Wednesday, let me report on my family on which your card makes much appreciated – and entirely accepted – comments.

Robin has his engineering degree and is now spending a year seeing a little of diverse businesses (for cash as well as experience) and expects to motor to India with some Oxford friends this spring. Next October, he will go either to the University of Toronto or London School of Economics to take a research degree in economics. He may ultimately return to engineering or some business or governmental use of it but wishes to learn something of how economies work, read some history and sniff a little at philosophy. … Richard, 18 yrs tomorrow, passed entrance into Univ. (at Oxford) but will not go up until Oct., 1963. Ad interim, he will go to a French university to round out his knowledge of the second Canadian tongue, do some mountaineering and perhaps have a few months in a French factory, owned by a friend of mine. In his last year at Westminster, he is head of almost everything: of the school naval cadets, head of water – i.e. captain of boats, head of his House and "princeps oppindanorum." All this commands his parents proper obeisance and alarm, but he survives high office without loss of humility. … Elizabeth continues her profound interest despite her fifteen years in stage production, and the theatre generally but does not wish to act: she wishes to "manage." She runs the school drama society and in the holidays attends the Junior Drama League school; and this summer hopes to be "apprentice" something – director or something – at £2 a week in the Royal Court Theatre. She reads enormously and beyond her years, and is learning to play the clarionet.

This then is my survey of a very energetic and sensible trio. As for Irene, she is world chairman of the Countrywomen and is going round the world next autumn visiting the national groups and attending the ACWW conference in Australia. She is also a Governor of the Commonwealth Institute, has finished her first draft of one book on Capt. John Palliser, an Irishman who explored and mapped the Canadian prairies a century ago. … As for myself, I hop from one country to another. I was in United States for a month last June (guest of the Corning Foundation, New York and the Centre for Democratic Studies, Santa Barbara), in Canada later and again in January, two or three times on the continent (once for a week walking around the edge of Mont Blanc with Rob) between last June and this month, and now I am off again, this time with purely voluntary duties. One of them is to write on my hobby, the role and structure of national broadcasting. …

But this letter has already gone far beyond the merits at least of the last person discussed: I confess it is the greatest possible pleasure to write at too great length about a very interesting family. However as Anatole France said about Benjamin Constant or some similar writer "he always wrote with more enthusiasm about himself and his own than anything else," – or some similar terms were used, and I confess to parallel guilt.

*

In March 1962 David Kirk advised Graham of a meeting of the CBL at which the executive passed a resolution making him an honorary lifetime member. On 21 March Eugene Forsey wrote to Graham, once again about the broadcasting situation:

> *I am now thoroughly frightened by what appears to be going on in the BBG, or perhaps I should say in the Chairman's mind. I think Guy Hudon, if not others as well, shares my alarm. … I assure you that I have ample documentary evidence to support my uneasiness; and each fresh document from the Chairman seems to me worse than the last. On one most important point, I had a letter from the Chairman which I called "curt" and "snippety," and which Guy calls simply "insultante." I have not answered it, and do not intend to. …*
>
> *Now, all this is rather by way of preamble to the specific matter on which I want your advice. If the Quebec decision is deferred, Hudon will almost certainly resign. I told the Board I should find it very difficult not to follow him. So did a third member (English-speaking). The probable reasons for deferment would be flimsy in the extreme. Hudon's judgement (and mine, for what it is worth) is that there would be an explosion in Quebec, an explosion which, incidentally, would gravely damage the government. This last is itself, in my opinion, important, because while the NDP has sold out to the loonies in Quebec, and the Liberals have gone far towards doing likewise, the Government alone has stood firm. It would be a very bad business if a wrong Board decision gave the loonies further ammunition, further apparent ground for saying that the attempt to work with the "English" was hopeless, and that the only thing to do was move towards the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy which the* less *loony of the loonies are seeking. …*
>
> *If Hudon does resign over Quebec, should I go too? Or should I record a public dissent (this, I think, is the very least I can do), and stay on to fight Andrew's plans for the system generally, and put a spoke in his wheel? My ability to do this latter would be gravely diminished by Hudon's departure. … I do beg you to believe that neither Hudon nor I is acting "lightly, unadvisedly, or wantonly." The general situation is* very *bad, and I think gets daily worse; and the probable grounds for a deferment in the Quebec case are decidedly bad.*

Graham replied:

> *My view is a combination of a terrible regret that if you leave especially with Hudon that the others will have their way with the CBC; and on the other hand an acknowledgment that if Quebec plus, I repeat plus, the other issues … are just too serious, then you and Hudon may have to go out.*
>
> *Out of this conflict come these two comments: I hope it will be possible*

> *for both of you to stay, but if the issues are so serious that you must go, then you should go together and issue a joint statement giving the full explanation. Your reasoning on this … is altogether sound. It must be entirely clear, the statement, and strictly remote from politics. And it is of course most desirable that the resignations be not only French-Canadian.*

On 8 June Finlay Payne cabled Graham: "Resignation of himself Hudon from Board announced by Forsey today."

*

For a six-week period, beginning mid-June 1962, there are very few letters on file but many cables. The doctors in Saskatchewan went on strike to protest the province's introduction of a medical-care scheme and Graham was asked to help break the strike by sending replacement doctors from Britain. Early in May, in anticipation of the strike, advertisements were placed in British papers seeking doctors. On 8 May Graham wrote to his friend, Lord Taylor, a doctor and a politician who had "played a fairly large part in the introduction of [the British] National Health Service":

> *There is an open struggle between the Government of Saskatchewan and the College of Physicians and Surgeons. In effect, the doctors are fighting the introduction of the Medical Care Scheme adopted by the Legislature. There is even the threat by the profession to withdraw its services in some form and much is made of the threat of a number of the doctors to leave the province if, on July 1st, the Act is applied.*
>
> *On May 3rd all but a skeleton staff of doctors from all over the province converged on Regina to make their protests.*
>
> *I thought Premier Lloyd's speech enclosed would be of interest to you and if you have any comments on what the Government is doing I would be very interested to hear them.*

On 7 June Graham wrote to Don Tansley, chairman of the Medical Care Insurance Commission in Regina. The letter refers to Dr. Wolfe, one of the few Saskatchewan doctors who supported the medical-care legislation and worked with the government to ensure its implementation:

> *We are very glad that Dr. Wolfe is here and Bill Knights* [Graham's assistant] *has been laying on several interviews with doctors. Dr. Wolfe will probably leave this week-end for a number of places between here and Edinburgh. … As you are aware, the newspapers have shown some interest in Dr. Wolfe's visit which was known to them in fact before he arrived. Yesterday he saw Mr. Matters of the* Toronto Star *and Mr. David Oancia of the Canadian Press and last evening, Mr. Lapping* [of] *the* Guardian. *There have also been despatches from Canada in the* Times. *The* Times *was the first, last Friday, to use the*

> *term "strike" of Saskatchewan doctors. … Dr. Wolfe is seeing … Lord Taylor at the House of Lords tonight.*
>
> *As I see it there are two situations: i) There is the filling of vacancies in rural areas made possible by the existence of the Commission but in effect this is simply a continuing of recruitments hitherto done by municipal or other authorities. On this ground, until the arrival of Dr. Wolfe we have taken the line … that Saskatchewan House has been doing this work for fifteen years … ii) The second situation is, of course, that which may or may not emerge seriously after July 1st. …*
>
> *There are two or three possibilities if a real emergency arises and you need a pool of doctors, should there be no medical services available in certain areas. One suggestion is that we get recent graduates with hospital experience to go out for several months through the universities and we have made some very preliminary enquiries about how this can be approached. … A second suggestion is to use doctors who fought the battle here for recruitment either to fill vacancies permanently or for whatever period – say three months – the emergency might last. Advertising also will, of course, be continued for permanent posts.*
>
> *My own impression is that the work that Bill Knights has done is definitely encouraging and we have no doubt that sufficient applications could be secured. The total number of doctors now to be interviewed is of the order of 40 and each mail brings in one or two more, even though the advertising ceased on May 19th.*

On 8 June Lord Taylor wrote to Premier Lloyd:

> *I have been over with Dr. Wolfe and Mr. Spry the question of recruiting doctors here for your Service, if the worst should come to the worst. Your Terms of Service are so generous that I do not think there should be any great difficulty in getting the numbers you need. But my assessment is that the worst will not come to the worst. Provided you stand firm on the main principles, I should have thought you would be bound to win through, just as we did, to the ultimate benefit of both the patients and the doctors of Saskatchewan.*

The worst did happen and Lord Taylor was invited to Saskatchewan to assist with negotiations with the doctors.

The following are mostly cables, since communications between Graham and Saskatchewan officials during the strike were conducted principally by cable or telephone. The first urgent message arrived on 26 June from Graham Clarkson, who was with the Medical Care Insurance Commission in Regina:

> *Pull out all stops. Circularize hospitals as follows. Quote openings available in private practice for general practitioners in rural areas and for general practitioners and specialists in urban areas. … Special*

> *bonus for physicians who are able to come to Saskatchewan on temporary or permanent basis on or before July fifteenth.*

Graham cabled Don Black, the deputy minister of the Department of Industry and Information:

> *At the moment we have two extra staff and will be looking for two or three more temporaries. We anticipate that ten days from now we may have an enormous volume of correspondence to deal with as a result of some circulars. As it is, newspapers, doctors, medical associations and what not are very much crowding us, on top of our ordinary migration, visitors, and the appalling succession of official gatherings – three this evening.*
>
> *I will try to get at the annual report but you will understand that we are pushing aside everything, to work under the instructions of the Medical Care Commission. May I say that since writing you personally I have had a cable from Premier Lloyd authorizing us to take directions from the Commission.*

On 2 July Graham cabled Clarkson:

> *Because numerous newspaper inquiries please authorise press conference and supply factual statement Wednesday covering numbers doctors withdrawn and number still available.*

Clarkson replied immediately:

> *The Saskatchewan College of Physicians and Surgeons has carried through its threat to strike. The College has organized some 240 volunteer physicians to provide only emergency services at 34 of the provinces 150 hospitals.*

Graham cabled back on 7 July:

> *Three consultants interviewing regularly plus one occasionally. Arranging them other cities.* Toronto Star *featuring criticisms strike from British doctors. Our administration cluttered. Medical and newspaper enquiries torrential.*

Three days later Graham cabled again: "Ten doctors arriving Saskatoon tonight Tuesday, flight 63... Twenty-three contracted today," followed by yet another cable the next day, 11 July: "About 20 doctors arriving Friday." Clarkson responded on 13 July:

> *Recruit temporaries up to August fifteenth... Please set up permanent recruiting if possible. ... Congratulations... Excellent work.*

Graham replied immediately:

> *Contracts by tonight 85 including 27 arrivals up to July 12 – 17 departures today.*
>
> *Premier statement Royal Commission highly useful. Got it summarized*

> *BBC national news and … press conference today. … Adding two more … medical interviewers Edinburgh Newcastle. Interviewers now number five. Permanent application beginning flow.*

Finally, on 15 July, Clarkson was able to send the following message:

> *Do not accept any more doctors for temporary contracts unless they can stay in Saskatchewan at least 3 full months. Will take as many permanent as are available. … War of nerves continues here but essential medical needs being provided haphazardly. Most grateful for your invaluable help.*

The following is a letter from Graham to Jack Kinzel at the Medical Care Insurance Commission in Regina:

> *Many thanks indeed for your most helpful letter of July 14th. … Until this weekend we have been bombarded with questions by newspapers of the North Atlantic world, and sometimes we are hard put to it to find an answer. One of the extraordinary things is, however, that the papers here have really not asked about the people mostly concerned, namely the patients. … We understand that negotiations are almost reaching a conclusion today. This is suggested by very brief despatches in one or two newspapers this morning. … Our figure of doctors whom we have sent from this country will reach 97 tomorrow night, and would have been 98 except for a stroke that one of the doctor's mothers had this morning. At the moment there is no one leaving on the 25th, but on the 26th there will be three people and perhaps five; so we will be past the hundred mark, and we could send more if needed. … If anyone had entertained the idea that doctors would not be found this must have altered that impression. We are now getting deeply into permanent appointments, and Bill Knights is taking this over. We still have several extra staff but things are more normal and the awful three weeks when everything was a wild rush seems to have ended.*

On 23 July Clarkson contacted Graham:

> *Stop recruiting temporaries. Text of agreement signed today by Lloyd and Dalgleish* [president of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan].

Graham cabled back the next day:

> *Following … conversation on the 23rd, twenty-one doctors departures cancelled including today's group. If this is not correct please urgently advise.*

On 26 July Clarkson replied:

> *Cancel fall drive. Detailed letter to follow. Sorry for lack of communication deadbeat. Your support played important part in settlement.*

On 2 August Graham wrote to Bjorn Arnason in the premier's office:

> *As you may well imagine, we have had a very hectic month or more here. Over a weekend we were thrown into business of recruiting doctors, and had to double our telephones and double our staff; we still have five more than normal.*
>
> *I managed to break away on July 4th to go to Henley with Dr. Benjamin Spock to see our sons row; on the 16th July I went to the airport with Lord Taylor and on the 18th and 19th I called on the three doctors from Saskatoon. Otherwise, between the last weekend in June and the 24th July, I was never out of the house – not even to buy razor blades, get a hair cut or a breath of fresh air. As far as I was concerned, Saturdays and Sundays were just like week-days; the telephones started at breakfast time and went on until midnight. ... When the recruiting was at its height we had almost as many newspaper correspondents calling as doctors – they included men from* Time, *Chicago* Tribune, *etc. etc. as well as, of course, the British and Canadian Press; they all had to be tactfully received by myself. ...*
>
> *Irene will be in Regina for two days on her world tour. ... She will be staying with Mrs. Woodrow Lloyd. ... I should certainly very much like to take a vacation, but there are a number of ragged edges in this medical affair – such as the position of doctors whose arrangements to go to Canada were cancelled. All this will keep us busy for several weeks yet.*

Graham wrote a final letter to Jack Kinzel on 21 August:

> *We are now seeing returning doctors and one or two newspaper men. I have also had personal letters from various friends; all of these sources share your conclusion that Premier Lloyd greatly increased his stature and has considerably strengthened his position by his moderation and integrity. ... You were kind enough to mention that the doctors we sent had played a part and, from my prejudiced point of view, I of course regard them as an essential part of the whole programme. Just what would have happened if there had not been some ninety or more doctors sent out I cannot guess, but I am inclined to think that the week ending Friday, July 13th, made an enormous impression on the College and the KOD* [Keep Our Doctors committee]. *In the eight previous days something like 63 doctors arrived, and there were more every week. Because of this the College became worried, and the three Saskatchewan doctors whom they sent over here told me that the Deputation had only been decided as late as Monday and Tuesday, 16th and 17th July, because the situation had become urgent. Their purpose, as they indicated to the Press and also to myself, was twofold: to decrease the flow of doctors to the province, and to "correct" the publicity in the United Kingdom.*

To Finlay Payne at the CBC Graham wrote:

> *You may be interested to know that the CBC played a considerable role in the doctors' affair by its balanced and calm news reports and other*

programmes. On the doctors' side, one or two of their leaders told me they were outraged by the CBC's failure to appreciate the doctors' case. On the other hand, British doctors now returning told me that the CBC was the only service which gave both sides and which could be relied on to be factual. ...

My wife has started a round-the-world trip. My elder boy is returning from India. My next boy is near the North Cape in Norway and my daughter has just returned from the Rhineland before going on tomorrow to Bala in North Wales.

Between the end of the "doctors' affair" and the desertion of my family I should be in a position to do some real work in my spare time, but I have not been able to get down to it.

Many thanks indeed for the clippings and the Annual Report. I am looking forward to seeing Mr. Ouimet here shortly.

1962-1967

Saskatchewan House; bilingualism and biculturalism; broadcasting.

> *You certainly saw the issue long before others; your use of the term "bi-cultural" is one of the earliest we have found. Today, of course, French Canada uses the term "bi-national," but they mean the same as you meant by "bicultural."* (Frank Scott, member of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to Spry. NAC, Vol. 13-8)

Irene left on her ACWW trip around the world on 27 August 1962. Graham met with her briefly in Regina on 13 September and then did not see her again until 9 December in Rome, where they spent a few days with Vladimir and Florence Ignatieff before going on to London together. The letters that follow, all to Irene, were written between August and December 1962. In them, Graham refers to Dianne Lloyd (Woodrow Lloyd's daughter), who lived at Saskatchewan House for a time; Mary Bailey, another native of Saskatchewan studying in London, who moved into Saskatchewan House in the fall of 1962 and stayed for about two years; and Ann Constant, a ballet dancer who was a frequent house guest. The first letter is dated 31 August:

> *I also today had a letter from Dianne asking me to give her away at the wedding on Oct. 6th and have replied I would be delighted.*
>
> ***
>
> *As I cabled, we had a letter from Rob. It was dated Aug. 31 but was posted Sept. 2nd from Persia. It appeared from what I could read that he was returning not via Teheran and the northern route but south through Persepolis to Turkey, that is Trebizond, Ankara and so home, via Istanbul. … Lib returned from Bala yesterday and had a wonderful time. I met the two grammar school boys in whose crew she was… They are taking her to the Flamingo Jazz Club tonight – a diffident Pa agreed on the ground that you had allowed her to go to Soho once before. She will be back home by 11 p.m. Bala added more of the confidence that the Rhineland gave and attendance upon her by two boys has certainly not detracted from that confidence. … A long and excellent letter from Richie arrived two days ago. Their geigering … work has ended; they climbed a mountain and have one more to do before returning via Gothenburg.*

***

With parties before and parties after Dianne's wedding, we are returning only now to normal. Dianne arrived from Canada four days before the wedding and stayed here until last Saturday. There was a stag party – happily not here – Thursday, a party D. arranged herself Friday; luncheon Saturday for Dianne… We then drove to the wedding in Ewell and I duly gave the bride away. And a few returned from the wedding to the house but happily left reasonably early… Monday, we had a small reception here for the Wheat Queen of Saskatchewan, a nice child of 18 accompanied by her mother. Those present were the usual CBC *and press people and two or three old and new Rhodes scholars. Rich and Rob had lectures and arrived rather late – Rich was lecturing at Westminster on the Norway trip and Rob was being lectured at at* LSE. *So much for social activities – and yes, Stephen Ferguson* [George Ferguson's son] *turned up Sunday; and there were doctors here for lunch yesterday and I am out to lunch the rest of the week; and the evenings would have been free except for a rush invitation from the Lapointes to fill in a late refusal tonight.*

And the family. Rob with some difficulty is step by step getting through the strange ways of LSE, *finding lectures, enjoying them and working very hard. He is reading the* Times, Guardian *and* Financial Times *as well as the* Economist *and is showing an increasingly lively interest in affairs. … Today, Rob and I saw* [Rich] *off at Victoria for a day in Paris with Vincent and he will be in Grenoble on Sat. … He took an enormous suitcase, a rucksack, a typewriter and a camera with him. The suitcase was not filled with books – except one on economics … and a dictionary I bought him. His burden really consisted of mountain equipment, ropes, crampons, anarack, my ski boots and whatnot. I reminded him as I left him that he was going to study and not only to mountaineer. … Lib's friend Chris, by the way, has taken her out two or three times to a movie and called for her here. She met him at Bala. He is from Croydon and asked her to his home there and to a theatre in Croydon – but I said, no, firmly but he could come here. Lib, if you please, proposed a first run movie on Piccadilly and probably ruined the young man – that was a week ago and he has not telephoned since, so far as I know. … I at last broke down and bought a projector. The four of us had an evening of slides – Norway, Kingsmere, Cypress Hills etc. etc. (India is still to come) and we are now in an efficient position to bore our friends indefinitely. Let me admit at once that my own slides are quite superb – Mont Blanc, Matterhorn, Italy – and my chances of boring are easily the highest in the family – unless you bring back a still more imposing collection of Australia, Asia and Africa.*

Ann Constant is in and out and mostly out. Her job suddenly came to an end but she has another one starting next week. It begins with rehearsals here but opens in Bristol and she will probably leave us at the *end of the month. She leads the household in telephone calls and keeps office and family busy night and day – agents and theatre people some of the time; young gentlemen more of the time.*

The house keeps going and Evelyn copes well with the buying. … The milk bill startled her until I explained the capacities of Rob and Rich. … Rob and Lib now and Rich this morning send love. We are all behaving quite well but make no promises for the future.

I hope you are getting some rest between your endeavours. Your energies are just too extensive and one of these days you must settle down – as your husband has – almost – done.

***

Telephone calls for Ann, for Lib, and recently for Dianne – all this dating, engaging & marrying keep me busy. Rob & I feel like has beens. … I have already looked up air (and train) times to Rome in Dec. I may go by way of Grenoble to see how Richie is settled in.

***

[Rich] *seems to be covering a wide field in lectures and travaux publiques as well as high mountains and expenses, and apparently thinks his hearing and chatting French is sufficient. But £50 something for skis is just too wide and too high! … Miss Mary Louise Bailey, the daughter of the professor of neurology, is now staying with us … for a month or two and* [will] *do two things: be in the house when I was out to keep Lib company, and, second, help when needed with the house. … Rob is, I think, quite enjoying LSE and actually saw his supervisor this week and liked him. He is now laden with another vast reading list and so far as I can tell is thrusting vigorously into the field of economics. Last Sunday, he asked me to go for a walk with him; … we had a fine chatting stroll for nearly two hours in Kensington and Hyde Park. A very good lad. …*

Medicare dominates my work and the situation is so interesting that I have found it a distraction from my writing about broadcasting.

***

Just to send you Richie's letter. I had one also to-day and another Friday last – about finance and sent him £50 today. He appears to be enjoying himself even though les français are not too amicals. Perhaps, they see him as an austere Saxon.

Lib wheedled some new clothes out of Pa and £5 instead of £4 a month allowance. Rob expects to do a film and get some money for it from the LSE film society – but it is not yet certain.

***

It was exciting for Rob and for me to hear your voice across the *continents and the oceans but Lib was most grieved that she was out shopping. ... Both Rob and I sensed that you might perhaps be a little lonely and even that you would have liked to come straight home.*

That would be a matter for delight with us all, but it would be sad to cut your trip, just as you were leaving the Saxon world, and to drop Indonesia, India and the rest. Perhaps, however, after Turkey or Greece you might like to come straight home, depending on the world situation and the obligations you have to your organizations. We will see.

No satisfactory answer could be given to your question – should you return home because of the Cuban imbroglio? Indeed, anything could happen. But all in all, I think, and, from such sources as I have briefly consulted, learned that some settlement will emerge after days and even weeks of manoeuvring on the worst tension since the war. ...

So far more confidently than I feel, I answered your question with a No. I had expected such a question and the reply was not without consideraton. I will cable you if there is any reason to amend my reply. And there is the Chinese invasion of Indian territory. That also is serious but its impact on your travels may be more upon the regularity of air schedules and types of aircraft than more serious arrangements. However, I would be cautious about Afghanistan especially in terms of air services, and such alluring plans as a visit to Kabul might well be reconsidered and (on such advice as you get in Delhi) abandoned. The Chinese thrust will probably halt but Indian arrangements may well clutter the northern frontier transport and other services. This is just my own guess; I have not consulted anyone. ... I will cable if the Cuban affair gets really *alarming.*

***

Letters arrive from Richie every second day and every second letter includes a new reason for more money. I have already sent him about £160, and he still has hopes of buying steel skis at £50 or now £35 second hand. I am afraid I am still unrelenting but realize it is only a temporary defence. ... Rob has finally got his hand on the £75 – or a promise of it quite definitely – and his mind is full of scripts and locations. Much of the 20 minute film will be shot on the underground. He has also sold photographs to the Countrymen *– earning, after they appear in a few weeks, £8.8.0. Rob's hair by the way is so long we are thinking of braiding it into pigtails. He wears a blue shirt to* LSE *and, as far as I can discover, he has not changed it since, say, Persia. This however is, without evidence, entirely denied. However, Rob still wonders what he wants to do with life, and is argumentative about atomic bombs. ... Only another three weeks or so until you are here. It has been a travelling year for all of us and I am almost inclined to suggest a Spry service of thanksgiving in the Abbey when we are all here safe and sound again.*

*

In 1963 the number of letters Graham wrote decreased substantially. The subject matter continued to include broadcasting, politics and the threat of separatism in Quebec. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (the B. & B. Commission) was established by Pearson in 1963 to "recommend ways of ensuring wider recognition of the basic *Cultural Dualism* of Canada." It was chaired by Davidson Dunton, formerly of the CBC, and André Laurendeau, editor in chief of *Le Devoir*. Another of its members was Frank Scott, who asked Graham to make a submission to the commission, especially on the role communications did or could play in promoting bilingualism. Graham studied the issues thoroughly and made several speeches on it but did not make a submission, explaining to Scott that "I have gone off smoking [and] find it almost impossible to write."

The following letters begin in April 1963, just after Pearson and the Liberals defeated Diefenbaker's Conservatives in the federal election. In a letter to Tommy Douglas, Graham's continued concern over the state of broadcasting is apparent:

> *The election results have been given great space in London and I have of course followed the election with enormous interest. The final results are not in every way satisfactory by any means but at least there will be a change and the Social Credit threat in Quebec has been got down to something like size. … No doubt there will be discussions between you and Mike Pearson, despite the feelings of the campaign. I hope that if there are conditions attached to any support offered by NDP, one of them will be a reassertion of the primacy of the CBC as the nation-wide broadcasting institution and network in Canada. The previous government has seriously threatened the stature of the CBC and opened wide the expansion of commercial broadcasting. I know you agree that we should restore the CBC to its proper position in the life of Canada and I hope that this will be one of the objectives of the NDP.*

To Eugene Forsey Graham wrote:

> *Many thanks for sending me the brief of the CFPC radio. I had not expected to receive any further of these papers from you. … I am not too happy that Jack Pickersgill will be responsible for the CBC and BBG. His political future in a large measure depends on Don Jamieson* [president of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, 1961-64] *and if the truth were known I began to revive the Broadcasting League before the election of 1957 because of some concern at the attitude I found expressed by* [Pickersgill] *and some of his then Liberal colleagues. However, there are other ministers who understand the CBC and I am hopeful that a reasonable policy will emerge after full enquiry, preferably by Royal Commission.*

Forsey replied that he "was most uneasy about Pickersgill, especially in combination with Jamieson; both as clever as paint, and neither to be trusted farther than you can kick him."

To Mike Pearson, the new prime minister, Graham was more effusive:

> *Allow me to say to both Maryon and yourself how deeply and warmly I rejoice in Canada's new Prime Minister and how happily I offer my congratulations. In these Irene equally joins.*
>
> *My feeling is not only one of great pleasure. It is also one of relief. In the last few years, Canadians have demeaned themselves in too many fields: lost their direction at home; sacrificed some of their authority abroad. There has been a decline of dignity and a faltering of purpose. Now the bad patch is over and we can raise our heads again. Your victory and the names of the leading ministers in the Cabinet already – as London judges – have improved the stature of Canada.*
>
> *You and Maryon will have thousands of these letters imposed on you. Mine deserves and expects no reply. But I could not let so great and reassuring an event in the life of Canada and of a friend to occur without expressing my own vast pleasure and wishing you and Maryon success and health in your heavy, heavy tasks.*

A letter dealing with broadcasting was sent to Graham's longtime associate, Finlay Payne:

> *I am most anxious to be kept closely in touch with speeches by the new Minister. ... Yesterday, I had a most satisfactory and reassuring conversation with the new Prime Minister. Indeed it could not have been more reassuring. I am not sure that I should quote him to you but he told me that he regarded the problem as one of the most serious his government would have to resolve, and that he had in mind a Royal Commission. I urged him not to be too hurried at arriving at a policy and expressed a hope that no one person in or out of the government would exert too much influence. He assured me that no one minister and no one broadcaster would shape the policy but it would be a decision of the government as a whole after the deepest study. Further, I am to let him know when I am in Canada next so that we may have a more detailed discussion.*

To Jack Pickersgill, about whom he had voiced his concerns to Eugene Forsey, Graham sent the following letter:

> *This letter is of course about broadcasting, but first let me congratulate you on your return to office and the victory of the Liberal Party. A Canadian living abroad and seeing much of British and European people can only draw a great deep breath of relief. The personnel of the new government and the visit of the Prime Minister have already changed the atmosphere.*
>
> *The purpose of this letter is to ask if your secretary would be good enough, first to let me have a copy of your recent address to the*

> *Canadian Association of Broadcasters in Toronto and second to place my name on your mailing list for your addresses on this subject. Broadcasting here and indeed in other countries is my main leisure activity and I will very keenly follow the development of the policy of the new government. Goodness knows Canadian broadcasting is one more mess that needs cleaning up and it cannot be done in a hurry. The key problem is not only the financing of the* CBC *or its programming. Far more important is private broadcasting.*
>
> *Sometime I will be glad to prepare some memoranda but there is a possibility that I may be going to Canada sometime this summer. I hope you will allow me to call on you.*

Tommy Douglas received another letter from Graham on 23 July:

> *Thank you very much for your letter of 17th July, I am very glad indeed to hear that you will be in Europe and look forward to seeing you if you stop over in London. … I have been writing quite a lot privately on broadcasting and burst into print in the* Free Press *in Winnipeg June 15th and the* Canadian Broadcaster *Toronto July 4th. Both of these examined the ridiculous proposal that* CBC *be sold and the* CBC *turned into a minor programme producer. This is an old proposal but it cropped up in May in newspapers right across Canada and I thought it was high time the proposal was analysed. … Such is the changing situation and the mess created by the last government that a new and entirely independent Royal Commission of the greatest capacity is, I am sure, essential. … House of Commons Committees are ignorant, partisan and incompetent and I am afraid I have to say this goes for all parties. The members are simply too busy to study highly complicated yet incomplete data and on the other hand, are terrified of saying anything that may upset their local private station. Private broadcasting, in fact, is the most powerful lobby in recent Canadian history. A review I had made of Hansard for another purpose failed to reveal a single attack on local stations by members sitting for the same constituencies. …*
>
> *In the previous parliaments I made several efforts to provide information to the* CCF *group but got nowhere.*
>
> *Now that you are in command, a very much better show can be made, and I would like to give every possible help.*

On 6 October Graham flew to Montreal. He visited Quebec City, Ottawa, Toronto and Saskatchewan before returning to London in early December. The following letters are to Irene, the first from the Windsor Hotel in Montreal on 7 October 1963:

> *I rested an hour here & then had a) dinner chez Fergusons and, b) 9ish – saw Stephen A. at some Hungarian friends. Both rencontres (I am bicultural, you see) were dominated by the Fr-Cdn issue – & it is dark indeed. The Hungarians – an architect & his doctor wife – work among Fr.Cs & feel an increasing difficulty & hostility & fear exclusion:*

> *nurses, school children etc. are all involved. But no one seems to know where the impulse, the clever slogans & leadership are coming from.*
>
> ***
>
> *I have been very much on the run from one place or person to another & am enjoying mightily the superb autumn sun, old friends, Canadian scenery & Canadian problems. In Montreal, I had evenings with the Fergusons & the Scotts, lunched with G.V.F. & Scottie* [Bruce] *& had an hour with the Ouimets. In Quebec, I ran into the ann. meeting of the Cdn. Chamber of Commerce & concentrated on getting to know some Fr. Cdn. business men. It has been all very revealing. I had half an hour with Eric Kierans, heard Lesage make a very statesmanlike speech & met very briefly the Min. of Industry, Levesque – not René who took over Quebec Power.*
>
> *In Ottawa it has been bang, bang, bang & somewhat unplanned because of Sask. arrivals. ... Further yesterday was Thanksgiving & from Fri. until to-day, there was quite an exodus of those I hoped to see. However, I had 4 hours with a senior CBC official, 2 hours with Dr. Stewart and hope to see Don Jamieson this week, as well as others including Pickersgill's assistant, on my hobby. I had ... lunch Friday with Walter Gordon... I see the Douglases to-morrow.*
>
> ***
>
> *In Toronto, I had lunch with Cy Laurin, V-Pres, Maclean-Hunter ... & called on Austin Weir & Frank Peers to help them with their books on broadcasting. ... The issue in Quebec is not "separatisme": it is a revision of confederation to establish a bi-national structure; a dual not a multiple federation... I have read some ten or more books by "separatists" & talked to both French-Canadians as well as to those like Frank Scott, Eugene Forsey & others: Quebec, it is clear, has decided the BNA Act is obsolete & demands equality with the rest of Canada.*

In January 1964 Maurice Lamontagne replaced Jack Pickersgill as the minister responsible for broadcasting. Graham wrote him immediately:

> *Allow me, with respect, to express my satisfaction that you are now the Minister responsible for broadcasting. Mr. Pearson showed me in 1958 your perceptive criticism of the Broadcasting Bill and I am aware from this and from your friends of your deep knowledge of the Canadian situation.*
>
> *This letter is written (i) to ask you to allow me from time to time to send you my own personal views on this subject, and (ii) herein to make a comment regretting that a Special (or Standing) Committee of the House may be set up this session. ... However, if the Cabinet is committed to a Committee, then I suggest that the terms of reference specifically provide, as a first order of business, the examination of the financing and programming of private stations and their financial,*

> *programme and other arrangements with non-Canadian interests. The main problem of Canadian broadcasting is not the CBC. The main problem is the efficient use of combined public and private revenues for Canadian and other programming, and the costly, wasteful and inefficient distribution of private revenues by private stations.*

Lamontagne replied: "I would be most happy to receive communications from you about this subject."

To Frank Scott Graham wrote:

> *In suggesting last October that I put in a paper on communications to your Royal Commission, you led me very far afield. I am now spending almost all my leisure time on the broad subject to which the Commission is enquiring. I have been led from a study of mediaeval history into a reading of Aquinas; from the policy of the various Orders up to problems of federalism over the centuries.*
>
> *I am also delving into the policy of cultural expansion by de Gaulle and the policy, if you will, of the Catholic church. I am, for example, seeing next week for lunch, the principal officer of the Archbishop of Canterbury: he is, by the way, the first to fill the vacancy since the beheading of Thomas Cromwell. I am also hoping to arrange a chat with Bishop Bayne of the United States, who lives down our street and is preparing for the next great conference of the Anglican church. ... I am afraid I must blame all this on you. However, be not alarmed! I find I am much better at collecting information these days than at putting it together... Since seeing you then, while I have not lost but rather increased my sympathy for French Canadian aspirations where they support confederation, I am becoming more and more a strong confederation man. Separatism, I take it, except in the event of total folly, on both sides, is not the danger. The danger is what Eugene Forsey calls: "dual monarchy" and the vital weakening of federal powers. In this day and age the weakening of central government is absurd. What we want is a stronger, not a weaker government.*
>
> *In sum, I am back to the outlook of social planning for Canada. Strength at Ottawa is necessary for economic policy. It is also necessary for national existence in an age of greater and greater agglomerations – for example, EEC. ... One idea I have is to get my second son, Richard, who is bilingual, to drive around Quebec for his own education and my information. He seems quite keen on the idea.*

*

In April 1964 Lamontagne announced the establishment of an independent broadcasting committee, not a royal commission as Graham had advocated. In the same month the CCF lost to Ross Thatcher's Liberals in Saskatchewan. On 30 April Graham wrote similar letters to Tom Kent, Walter Gordon, Gordon Sheppard (a special assistant to Lamontagne), and others. The letter to Kent is quoted here:

> *Rumour reaches me from Liberal sources that Don Jamieson is to be a member of the Committee on Broadcasting with Bob Fowler and that they will be here in London together about the 15th May. I may be misinformed, but would like you to mention, if it is at all possible, to the Prime Minister that I think it is a very great mistake to have a member of the Committee representing interests, and especially private interests. The Committee should look at the relationship of broadcasting to Canada as a whole and therefore the members should be Canadians of the greatest vision and capacity and, above all, disinterested and independent.*
>
> *Don Jamieson, however useful to the Liberal Party and however able, is neither independent nor disinterested.*

Bob Fowler, who headed the Royal Commission on Broadcasting in 1956, Marc Lalonde and Ernie Steele were appointed to what became known as the Fowler Committee on Broadcasting. Whether or not Graham's intercessions influenced the make-up of the committee is not known.

*

In the summer of 1964, the members of the Spry family were widely dispersed. Irene left in June for Canada, where she spent four months mostly doing research for her second book on John Palliser. The following letters are all to Irene, the first dated 2 July; "Isis" refers to Richard's Oxford rowing crew at Henley:

> *Well, Isis was beaten and the lads were very disappointed, even if it was the best race of the day. ... They will not try for the Olympics but will go to Barcelona in mid July. Rich will then go to Canada. By that time, we will all be in different places – Lib – Grenoble, Rob – Montreal, Rich – Halifax, you – prairies, me – Greece.*
>
> ***
>
> *I went to Dr. Gordon to-day & he found me sound in wind and limb. I reported mental decline – all he could say was that I should keep such a secret to myself.*
>
> ***
>
> [Rhodes] *is a good place for sun, swimming & history and I am really enjoying a most magnificent surge of total idleness & if totals can be increased, my total idleness is increasing: I am scarcely able to read & writing is beyond my faintly remaining powers. I just sit under a parasol & vegetate without even rumination. I look at my notes on Quebec & avert my gaze with a lolling nod towards the glittering blue sea. I am now fully aware I'll never work or think again.*

On 28 August Graham sent Irene birthday greetings and the news that Lib had passed biology and was therefore on her way to the University of

Saskatchewan, via Montreal, Toronto and Stratford. The next letter is dated 22 September 1964:

> *I have just obtained your arrangements for the week or so after your return. East this and west that, Institutes and Commonwealths and committees, day after day. There is no going back now, but these arrangements are really too exhausting after such a complex trip. You will have to make up your mind to reforming, to slowing down, and to reducing this tense and hectic life. … I am really concerned about you and about your health – and about your husband.*
>
> ***
>
> *I sent a cable yesterday to Ottawa to let you know that Rob and Richie had returned safely. … Both are in fine fettle, though tired, especially Richie after so much driving but a few long sleeps and both are flourishing. Rob was delighted with the NFB, his work, his colleagues, Montreal and Canada and after trying his MSc. exams will return to a job in Montreal … his idea is to remain a few years in the NFB and then aim at Hollywood or return to London or wherever the film leads him.*
>
> *Rich was equally excited by Canada. He found everyone and everything "quivering" with vitality and in comparison described London as dead. He seems to have acquired quite a grasp of the Quebec situation and talked with some authority to the vice-president of the CBC (with whom we had lunch today) who treated him and his views with respect. … He goes to Oxford this weekend and starts both rowing in a Univ. four and running the new coaching of OUBC* [Oxford University Boat Club] *talent… The* [Oxford] *Univ. reunion was agreeable and would have been more so if I had not been asked by the Master, Sir John Maud, to propose the Toast to the College – with him replying. I laboured mightily to get together both some serious comments and some diverting stories. How well I did, I do not know. I selected some rather ribald stories – such I would never ordinarily tell – and was surprised to hear myself delivering them with aplomb – and mostly with loud laughing response. …*
>
> *Hon. Eric Kierans will be here when you arrive and the Lapointes are having a party for him the night of your arrival. I doubt if you should go when you seem to have meetings the next day… We'll meet you, of course, at the aircraft on arrival Monday morning the 19th, but I wish you could have an easier week or ten days than the meetings you have laid on for yourself. We are all agreed, your three men, that you must tone down your activities and give yourself, not only the satisfaction of all the good things you are doing so well, but rest, relaxation and a little peace. …*
>
> *You will be in Montreal (or Quebec?) while the Queen is there. The interest and concern here is of the highest and much space is being given by the newspapers. … If English speaking visitors are any clue, the*

> *outburst against French Canada especially in the West and Ontario will be quite terrifying, should anything happen to the Queen. The whole thing infuriates me, mild as I am, not because of English Canadian feelings, but because the appalling disaster even a mildly serious incident would cause to French Canada; it would divide them, weaken them, and of course destroy moderation and sense elsewhere in the Canadian realm.*

*

When the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism published its interim report in 1965, Graham wrote to Tommy Douglas:

> *I am following Canadian politics or more particularly, the Quebec situation with great concern. I have subscribed to* Le Devoir*, Jesuit and Dominican papers, and devote all my leisure to reading a vast quantity of books, some good, some very very bad, by French-Canadians. This interest in Quebec has not displaced but certainly reduced, the time I give to broadcasting. Frankly I am deeply disappointed in the B & B Report. I have read it, not only verbatim very carefully almost at one sitting, but have been over it two or three times, and made some notes on it.*
>
> *My first impression was that it really stated the French case and stated it in the form of an ultimatum. Perhaps this is deliberate and desirable, but I think there are more French Canadian points of view than those of the middle and extreme Nationalists. My first impression of the results of the report was that it would be a great encouragement to the Nationalists, and everything I have read since convinces me that this impression has at least some basis.*

Later in the year the Fowler Report on broadcasting was published. In November Graham wrote to Eugene Forsey:

> *Thank you for sending me the clippings from the Toronto* Globe *about broadcasting. I am now going through the Fowler Report for the second time but have not come to any final conclusions. My first tentative conclusion is that the analysis of the situation was not deep enough and that the suggested changes, though significant in themselves, go no way to solving the deep-seated problems of Canadian broadcasting. ... If you have written anything about the election results, your comments would be of great interest. I think it is very satisfactory that neither Quebec nor Ontario went in different directions as a block and that in Quebec, for example, there are 9 Conservatives. Indeed, just looking at the figures of the votes cast for the different parties one does not see large support for separatism. Is this a right conclusion?*

In January 1966 Graham made two speeches on French Canada, and wrote to Ross Thatcher concerning them:

> *I was invited to speak to the Ralegh Club in Oxford on the 23rd January and to the European Atlantic Group in London on the 26th January. I*

> *chose the title "French Canada and Canadian Federation." My son, who is President of the Ralegh Club, was in the chair in Oxford and Lord Tweedsmuir at the meeting in London.*
>
> *I rarely make speeches but on this occasion the subject was closest to my deepest interests in Canada and both addresses seem to have gone very well; at any rate without modesty I enclose a few quotations from letters received. …*
>
> *The European Atlantic Group has quite close connections with embassies and businesses. Thirteen different governments including the Canadian Government were represented. Canada House was represented by the High Commissioner, the Deputy High Commissioner and one of the Counsellors. … If I do say it myself, I think I did a good job for Canada. The newspaper despatches take the line that we are on the point of breaking up. My conclusion was quite different, though I did not minimise the difficulties.*

The speech to the European Atlantic Group in particular was well received, and Graham's summation is quoted here:

> *In conclusion, let me outline the three or four strategies which are being pursued, on the whole reasonably and calmly, throughout the Canadian Federation. … The first is the strategy of adjustment by the Catholic Church in French-Canada to the new spirit of Quebec and the role of the state in Quebec – to both of which the Church itself has contributed. The Oecumenical Council in Rome facilitates and, in effect, endorses that adjustment.*
>
> *The second strategy of significance is not that of the avowed and total separatists, a tiny series of minor groups, who advocate the secession of Quebec here and now. More weighty is the strategy of those in the Quebec nationalist movements who advocate a special status for Quebec by treaty or other arrangement with the rest of Canada and something equivalent to a veto power over a weakened and diminished central Canadian authority. Some of the advocates of this strategy are in fact disguised separatists to whom this policy is but the penultimate step to total independence. The more serious advocates, however, believe that a looser federal association would go far to solve the Canadian problem; as they see it.*
>
> *The third and far more important strategy is that which seeks, by a revision of the Canadian constitution, to secure a special status for Quebec, within Canada, and to give expression to Quebec's aspirations within a united, still strong Canada. … The final strategy accepts the need for some change in the Canadian constitution but is based on a full determination: 1) to maintain an effective central government of Canada …; 2) to make adjustments ensuring a more ready response to regional and provincial needs; 3) to provide more specific guarantees and rights for Quebec, for French Canadians and for the French language throughout*

> *Canada. … Between the last three strategies many compromises are possible. Doubtless, in the ordinary course of political debate, there will be moments of stress and uncertainty. This is part of the democratic process… It is necessary and it is healthy.*
>
> *Moreover, almost the whole of modern Canadian history supports the conclusion that the result will be sensible, even wise, and that Canada again, as a century ago, will modestly point the way to "an era of wider unions and more assured peace."*
>
> *Realism, and an awareness that statesmanship can fail, and that two linguistic nationalisms re-enforced by denominational feeling can prove dangerous, do not lead me to qualify that hope or conviction.*
>
> *But other interpretations there are and other fears there have been. I quote only one: "We have come to a period in the history of this young country when premature dissolution seems to be at hand. What will be the outcome? How long can the present fabric* [of Canada] *last? Can it last at all?"*
>
> *These were the words of a great French-Canadian not long before he became Prime Minister of Canada, Sir Wilfrid Laurier.*
>
> *The words were written in December, 1891, seventy-five years ago.*

The agent-general for Ontario was one of several people to congratulate Graham and ask for copies of the speech:

> *You are to be congratulated on your excellent address to the European Atlantic Group last evening on the Quebec and French-speaking issues in Canada. It is a most complicated and delicate question and I thought you dealt with the subject with tact and understanding. … I would like to have five or six copies of your full address for my own records and to send Premier Robarts, George Drew and mutual friends in Canada.*

Eugene Forsey was also complimentary, telling Graham: "I have now read the whole of your speech, and can scarcely contain my admiration. It is a noble and eloquent work, which brings home to me afresh my own limitations; alike of thought and style." Graham replied:

> *I am enormously grateful to you for your letters of March 23rd and March 30th. When I asked you to read over my lengthy blurb, I really did not mean that you should dig out statistics for me. All I expected was the comment that this is wrong. However, let me thank you very very much for the various figures you have given me; it has saved a great deal of my time and taken up a great deal of yours. … I entirely agree that this whole theory of "two nations" is absurd and it should be analysed. It is no more than a step towards total separation and the same applies to the term "special status." That is, I agree with your speech in Niagara Falls last February fully on these points.*
>
> *I am not sure, however, that I agree with your statement (which I have*

> *not got before me) that if Quebec wants to secede – that is that. I really do not agree. This is one part of one house destroying the house and I do not think the major household can allow the minority household to take this step. I do not want to carry this point to the question of violence, but if French Canadians should take to the use of force, I do not see that we have any other choice but to resist with whatever means are necessary. I cannot believe that there are enough ridiculous groups in Quebec to go to such lengths and the more people like yourself keep challenging dangerous assumptions of the Quebec extremists, the less likelihood there is of extreme results ensuing.*
>
> *I am only skirting this whole question but my own view is that the destruction of Canada, by whatever means, is unacceptable and should be resisted to the extent necessary. Of course, this is a private view and I would not express it, outside of a private letter, in such dangerous terms.*

*

In February 1967 Graham received the following short note from Gilbert Ryle, at Oxford:

> *I'm delighted that you can come to our breakfast. ... I retire in June '68. It seems absurd. Surely we were undergraduates about a year ago?*

Retirement was also on Graham's mind. In July 1966 he had written a few letters to friends – Norman Robertson, Walter Gordon and others – advising them that he would soon be retiring and would like them to keep him in mind for any suitable position. He also wrote to Mike Pearson along similar lines:

> *I will be retiring some time in 1967 to live in Canada and this letter is to suggest my own name for consideration for one of the non-permanent, voluntary appointments, either in the newly constituted Board of Broadcast Governors or Board of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.*
>
> *Let me at once add that I am not looking for a paid job.*
>
> *While I would prefer to serve the CBC, I feel I could be more use as a voluntary part-time member of the BBG.*
>
> *You are aware of my life-time study of Canadian broadcasting. I am 66 and a recent check-up at the London Clinic established that I was entirely healthy. As, doubtless, regional representation will be a consideration, I could be deemed to be a Westerner.*
>
> *Perhaps it is not the usual form to suggest one's own name but I see no point in asking friends to do this for me.*
>
> *Next Wednesday I arrive in Regina on a two weeks' visit where I shall be at the Hotel Saskatchewan, and pass through Ottawa early in August.*

> *The White Paper as well as the Fowler Committee's Report have been studied. Neither, in my judgement, goes far enough in facing up to the nature of the Canadian broadcasting problem and, while there will be structural and personnel changes in the Boards, I do not see that the system itself is likely to change or improve.*

Pearson replied on 26 July:

> *Thanks for your note of July 15th. I would have liked to have been able to reply more promptly but hope this will reach you in Regina.*
>
> *I appreciate very much what you say about a broadcasting appointment in Canada. I can think of no one with better qualifications or experience than you have for participation in the new set-up but it does not look as if we will get any legislation through in this connection before 1967. However, I will keep in touch with you.*
>
> *Give me a ring when you are in Ottawa – I will hope to be here.*

By September 1967 the Spry children were all in Canada. Robin was at the National Film Board in Montreal, Lib was travelling across the country as president of the Canadian University Press, and Richard was beginning work with BP Oil in Montreal. Graham's plans were to retire in September 1967, to travel a bit on the continent and take some courses in French during the fall, then to travel across Quebec in early 1968 before settling in Ottawa. Irene decided to accept a university teaching appointment in Saskatchewan where she could continue her research on Palliser.

Graham's plans went somewhat amiss. His replacement did not arrive until the end of November and, although, he then decided to spend January until April travelling on the continent, he soon grew weary and lonely. Before the end of February 1968 he had packed his bags and headed back to Canada.

The following letters to Graham are from Irene, on her return to Canada accompanied by Lib. The first, dated 13 July, is from on board the Air Canada flight over the Atlantic:

> *Thank you so much, dear Graham – I hope you will enjoy your peace in the post-departure period, but we were very sad to set off leaving you behind to cope with the Department of Education… It has been a fantastic 20 years, dear Graham. Bless you and a happy termination to your labours. I still can't believe our time at Chester Street is over – but here's to the new life chez nous! … We'll cable when we get to Ottawa – and look forward so much to an eventual reunion there.*
>
> ***
>
> *A message from Robin greeted us on arrival … and he came to have lunch with us. His hair was untidy & longish but he had just had it cut so no longer shoulder length! … You will be glad to know that he had*

> *no flowers in his hair & no beads round his neck, nor has he ever taken LSD.*
>
> ***
>
> *Now we are really settling down. I have established a study on the side sleeping porch and am peacefully writing to the sound of the wind in the trees. I am gradually succumbing to Kingsmere once more, & wonder how we can bear to part with it.*

On 17 November 1967 Graham wrote wistfully to Irene, as he was preparing to leave Saskatchewan House:

> *The house is now emptied of Spry possessions and the last Spry voice here echoes dully in the bereft rooms. It is an end of a family era. Only dust on gaping bookshelves lingers briefly on; even this goes soon, and of us and our lives, nothing material remains but discarded and elderly furniture, the darker rectangles on the walls where pictures had hung, and the finger marks of many passings and many people around the handles of doors and the banisters of stairs. "Partir, c'est un peu mourir." This house is a cavern, bright, empty and without life.*

On 31 December Graham took a room at 20 Chesham Place, where he had lived when he first went to London in December 1937, where his and Irene's wedding reception was held in 1938, and where he had spent some of the war years after Irene had returned to Canada. A few days later he left on his farewell trip around Europe.

1968-1983

Retirement; accolades, family and friends.

> *Let me hear from you again. The years tramp along, but in a circle, and so old friends meet again.* (Laurie Phinney to Spry. NAC, Vol. 13-6)

The following letters are from Graham to Irene, beginning 4 January 1968:

> *Zurich was swaddled in snow when the aircraft touched down yesterday morning and walking into the building made me feel I was in Canada. At the door, feet were stamped to shake off the snow, that clumping sound had an 'O Canada' in it. … It was pleasant to read the list of all those you saw in the East… Don't work too hard: think of your idle, unemployed husband and the fine lassitude (but high altitude) of his retirement. He suspects it will not be a long one & that he will be flying westward earlier than he at first thought.*

***

> *The CBC app'tments were what I expected: Davidson* [George Davidson succeeded Alphonse Ouimet at the CBC] *is a very good man & was Brooke Claxton's deputy in Welfare. I don't envy him his job – it is the most merciless task in Canada (except being P.M.).*

***

> *The time factor plus the results of my probing of what Aix-en-Provence has to offer me at this moment, lead me towards an early departure for Paris, London and then Canada. … I may linger here a day or two more and also in Paris but I have had enough of wandering and see little chance here of finding just the teaching (instead of the lecturing) I need… Today, I had a letter from Dr. Riddell asking me, on behalf of the Council & Senate, to receive about Oct. 26 an honorary degree in Regina. This is very pleasant but you should be the recipient and I wish you could also be included: there should be a family honorary degree.*

***

> *My European travels have had good moments but all in all they have not been either very, very agreeable or rewarding. I am glad I made the trip but I am also glad to end it. It is, of course, the wrong time of the*

> *year but gloomy hotels and isolation have been mainly responsible for a measured rather than joyful estimate of the last month. Above all, there is the feeling of un-based-ness, of floating, indeed of purposelessness. But it has been a good holiday & now I want to see much of Canada – Halifax to Victoria – & get my teeth into something real again.*

When Irene told Graham that she had been approached by both the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Ottawa about a faculty position for the following academic year, he responded:

> *Saskatchewan is, all in all, to be ruled out & Ottawa preferred. … Ottawa has been steadily improving & wishes to go on doing so. Moreover, its bilingualism & previous (& still continuing) Catholic atmosphere are in themselves most useful. (I would be glad to have a job myself for these reasons at Ottawa – in history (British, French, Russian: or indeed "communications"). … The idea of myself joining you & both of us having the next year in Sask. has passed through my mind if a university job of interest & remunerativeness were to be open there. The two salaries would, indeed are necessary to get resettled in a home in Ottawa. But the atmosphere of Sask. is not too encouraging & on the whole I would like to be closer to Quebec & broadcasting boards in Ottawa. … My capacity for idleness, laziness, semi-comas, ceiling-gazing & non-initiative is, after six weeks or so of purposelessness, very high indeed. … I'll cable you when I leave – or rather when I will leave. It will be around the 20th Feb. but could be earlier.*

Irene replied on 12 February:

> *It is exciting news that you are to have an honorary degree from the Regina campus. Many congratulations! I had an idea that something of the sort might be brewing and am delighted by the news. It is sweet and generous of you to feel that I should be included, but it was entirely you who did all the work in connection with university staff and so much else for them. Again and again and again when people hear that I am your wife they launch into grateful eulogies about how much they appreciate things that you have done. You have certainly left a monument of fond appreciation in this Province. …*
>
> *For two days I have been in Regina attending the winter institute of the Saskatchewan Council of Public Affairs on the Carter Report. … The most interesting thing about the institute was Jacques Parizeau, Professor at l'École des Hautes Études Commerciales, affiliated with the University of Montreal. He was brought back from the London School of Economics to lend a hand with the quiet revolution and is deep in the whole Federal-Quebec bargaining process… He was an eye-opener as to how far "special status" has in fact progressed. … His other rather shattering contention was that no French Canadian will be acceptable to Quebec as Prime Minister, least of all Trudeau. With any one of the English-speaking candidates he thinks there is a chance of Canada surviving, but if it is Trudeau he has no doubt that Canada will blow up*

> *within 24 months. … a gloomy reflection when all the* WASPS *in Canada seem to be big-heartedly swinging their support behind Trudeau in the hope that this will solve the Quebec problem! Do go and see Parizeau when you are in Montreal. I told him I would ask you to do so. He is a tremendous person whether one agrees or not with his views.*

Graham landed in Montreal on 21 February, spent a few days with his children, then went to Saskatoon to visit Irene for a few weeks. From Montreal, before heading west, he wrote to her:

> *The three children have given me stern orders about my future – I'm not to leave Ottawa until I am a minister, senator or other well paid such. My own idea is more modest & I'll try to go to Saskatoon next weekend.*

On 20 March Graham arrived back in Ottawa, and wrote immediately to Irene:

> *Thank you for your welcome to me in Saskatoon, for the party & other gatherings including notably your students, and for the fine weather. In many ways, I wish I had remained: the sense of floating baseless in space is an unsatisfactory one, it is full of restlessness and wasted time. … The few hours in Wpg … were agreeable & I also enjoyed the day on the train across Ontario. I read Trudeau's* Fédéralisme *in French (& en route Toronto-Ottawa) read the English edition. A very good book. … In Ottawa, a not discouraging note was written in the* PM*'s office about the radio post… I remain fairly convinced that the case against me is a good one (age, absence) & no strong objections have been raised. However, we'll see when the list is announced, probably shortly.*

On 23 March he wrote again, informing Irene that he had not been selected for a position on one of the broadcasting boards:

> *The broadcasting boards were announced yesterday and the people whom I know seem very good. My name was of course not among them: I think I wrote you I was not too hopeful and while I am disappointed I am not surprised.*

Two days later, from Montreal, he wrote yet another letter:

> *It is a clue to my present life and state of mind that I do not know which address I am at or should use. Tonight will be my last chez Ferguson & to-morrow, I move to Frank Scott's for two days or so. I am writing however in Rich's flat, on my knee on his bed for there is no table & the only chair is a huge sedan sort of affair. … My next trip is as uncertain as my Montreal abode. If Rich gets me a visitor's seat, I will return to Ottawa for the Liberal convention, April 4-6. If I hear nothing from him (which is likely) I'll go on to Quebec & perhaps up to Lac St. Jean and then westward. Never have I felt so full of uncertainty, of lassitude, and (for all the great, very great, kindness of friends & family) … of*

> *isolation. I have no one spot where my few possessions are & what I need is always in some other than my immediate resting place. ...*
>
> *By now you will have my letter about Richie's one a.m. call last Friday and his departure to Ottawa Sat. 23rd to join P.E. Trudeau's headquarters as some sort of functionary in office management and then in the convention. The origin of this summons was ... a visit to King and Ruth Gordon. Alison turned up & remarked to Libbeth that she was in P.E.T.'s office and help might be needed; I suggested Richie might be interested... on Thursday, March 21st, [?] went round the staff asking if anyone knew an office manager type in any business who was or would be available. Alison mentioned Richie: the result was the early morning call to Montreal from P.E.T.'s office in Ottawa Fri. the 22nd.*
>
> *Rich accepted at once. ... He wrote to his immediate chief asking for a leave of absence for 15 days. This was ... rejected by the division chief. R. was then seen for an hour and told how effective he had proved in BP's service & how sure his future was. But R. went ahead & ... sent in his resignation. ... He was in great form Friday evening in his flat & not the least concerned that he had made no agreement about salary or expenses or that on April 7 or 8th, he would be unemployed. Rob came in later ... and rejoiced over Rich's decision. Rob, like Rich ... (& G.V. & M. Ferguson) are staunch supporters of Trudeau. ...*
>
> *This is written in Rich's flat. I am wearing my coat because though it is a sunny day, there is no heat. The toilet does not work. The bed is rather rugged & the neighbourhood and access somewhat dispiriting. I fear then I will lose the economy of living here in his absence but may be here the odd night à passage. I am here at the moment because a little Fr. Cdn girl left her ballet shoes here & I had to come down to let her in to pick them up... I also hoped to write some notes on the LSR for its historian but there is no place to lay out sheets or to write comfortably except on floor or knee. (Nor have I a view!)*

Finally, from Ottawa on 1 May, Graham was able to write:

> *This has been a day of revolution and frankly I am anything but sure it is also a day of wisdom. But we may, as a result, have a home of our own, that on Cloverdale, no. 446 (Plumptres & J.J. Deutsch's were much earlier occupants), a car and a large debt to service.*

*

In August 1968 Graham wrote a long letter to George Powell, a friend in London:

> *There are two beaver in our lake, Kingsmere, and one of the lodges is under our dilapidated boat house. Just before sundown each evening, first one beaver swimming and diving, crosses the lake; the other follows soon after. We also have a very lively, easily enraged red squirrel, a stately grey squirrel with a most self-important tail, and a black*

squirrel, timid, snooty, stupid. Bravest, friendliest, and fastest are several chipmunks. They defend their territory from each other and squirrels – and jays too – with enormous daring and speed. Under a stump by the path from the garage and roadway, we have a woodchuck. One morning, when I walked on to the verandah there on the sofa with a pillow under him was a racoon – all the doors were closed and how he got in, no one knows. A friendly fellow who ate bread and digestive biscuits from my hand for the next twenty-four hours but gave Irene a nip. He declined to leave when invited and stuck to a sofa, a red blanket and a brown pillow late into the night. We left the screen door open. He was gone in the morning.

Our cottage is on the brow of the shore and gazes through pine, balsam, cedar and hemlock, as well as birch, maple and oak, across the tiny lake. At the end of the lake, the sun sets over King Mountain. On the lake are 15 Snarks or other small sailing boats, numerous canoes, a few yellow rubber dinghies, and no motor boat. Chain saws roar and bark from time to time, and of course the motor car's growl is heard too often. But for most of the time there is only the cries of children splashing in the waters, the chatter of squirrels and the soughing of the winds in the gently moving trees.

Without the address you would know where we are. The weather however if described too baldly would deceive you: I have earned the scorn of my neighbours by saying this Kingsmere summer has been like a late Oxford November. This of course is unfair. But sunshine has been too rare; wind has been plentiful; cloud, rain, cold frequent. Only a few days have been really warm and the swimming really comfortable. … Already, there are branches on the maples as red and as rich as October, this although it is but August still.

No matter, this weather. I am as happy as could be to be idle and at home in the solemn country of the Canadian Shield: its sounds, colours, its trees and its waters are home and this house we have owned since Jan. 1946 is a buckle between my youth as it ended and my age as it begins.

What do I do? You may think that one thing I do not do is write letters. In part this is true; but I compose them in my mind and mean, when time allows, to transpose thought into ink. Alas, as the months tell you, this is rare. I write but it is writing about deeds, insurances, decorations, tree pruning, garden making – and accounts and bills and carpenters and plumbers and electricians. We have this summer place – 400 feet of lake front, 3.5 acres of wooded rock and soil, 10 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, a nursery and what not bought as a bargain as the war ended. Little beyond maintenance has been done in the years we have had tenants; and a fortune could be spent putting the whole unique property and house into shape.

As if this was not too much, we have also bought a house in Rockcliffe.

Irene wanted to build a house on a lot on the Ottawa river towards Britannia. Buying a house was a compromise, and we will be paying for years for its adaptation to our peculiar and bookish needs: we have eight tons of books to put into the miles (almost) of shelves that have been built to our needs. For the elderly all this may not be wise and it certainly is not being economical but I hope you agree it is brave.

Irene is a professor of economics at the University of Ottawa. My elder boy, Robin, is a director at the NFB, Montreal and has quite a little list of films to his credit; and some very exciting ones ahead. Richard, after a month as a manager of the office and facilities at the Trudeau leadership campaign, is now with … a public affairs group at CJOH, producing a CTV weekly pub. affs. prog. with Judy LaMarsh and Doug Fisher. Both the lads seem to work from early morning to early morning. My daughter, after a year as president of the Cdn. Univ. Press (the CP of 50 student papers) is now communications secretary, Canadian Union of Students. Between the three we are on the edge of politics and young activism: and see something of the PM's staff. …

I am keeping out of things as much as possible for the moment but when we are settled down in Rockcliffe I have two things to do, one about broadcasting, the other about my other favorite subject, Quebec and the rest of Canada. I do not seek or want, however, any full time work, I only want my hobbies. I hope to go across Canada from coast to coast sometime in the next six months and will in any event be in Saskatchewan to receive an LL.D. Hon. causa – Brock Univ. gave me one last spring. The reasons for these are not altogether justifiable but I am glad that at least the reasons covered not so much my respectable days in London but rather my disreputable and useful days as an agitator.

So much by way of report, explanation, and greeting. As for the real subject, Canada, what have we really to worry about really? Our problems are simple, relatively clear cut; we have a highly sensitive and intelligent public opinion, most political leaders are decent and public spirited, the civil service is one of the best, and the influence of fanatics is relatively minor. This is a very, very good country. I am entirely happy, absorbed, stimulated, to be here and to be home.

This does not mean I do not recall London and my friends with gratitude and look forward to seeing them again with pleasure – of course not. It simply means that I am content to be here, love being here and that I feel part of things, a participant rather than an observer: in this age of spectator sports, this sense of participation, however modest, is really a great advantage: I do not have to be polite and neutral; I can be my own rude, arguing self.

This letter has been long in coming. My conscience like another place is paved with intentions, often good. I'll catch up someday. In the meantime, I recall happily the kindnesses I owe to your initiative and the engraving and book soon to be unpacked which I received in the

> *gathering at the H. of Lords. Very many thanks and best greetings to you and all the gang.*

*

Over this period Graham received many invitations to speak at universities and before various groups; there were numerous requests for articles on the subjects with which he was familiar; and a steady stream of writers, researchers and university students coming to his door to interview him about the LSR, the CCF, the Cripps mission, broadcasting, French Canada, even his cycling trip in Quebec with Marius Barbeau in the late 1920s. He welcomed them all and was generous with his time. The requests are on file but the responses for the most part are not. Usually there is just a note on the letter of request in Graham's hand-writing saying "Replied, yes" and the date. This letter, from Colin Wright, at Trent University, is typical:

> *As part of my final undergraduate year at this University I am doing a reading course on Canadian radio in the 1930s. If I have accomplished nothing else during the first term, I have at least stumbled across your name innumerable times, and have raised some question on almost every occasion.*
>
> *I hoped it might be possible to probe tentatively for some of the answers at the obvious source. I shall be staying in Ottawa Wednesday December 18, through Saturday December 21 inclusive, and I wondered if you would suggest a time in this period when we might meet.*

Letters like the following from Harry Boyle, at the CRTC, were frequent:

> *On Dec. 27 I face a group of Harvard and Osgoode lawyers in San Francisco. I hope to talk about "The Responsibility of the Licensee."*
>
> *Could you give me a hand, since this subject seems a natural for your concern.*

Harry Hodson was writing a book on the Cripps mission to India. He added in one of his letters to Graham:

> *What was most thrilling to me was to know that you were now the owner of Kingsmere. I remember it so well, and you and me and Betty Smart bathing in the lake, 36 years ago. The wheel has indeed turned full circle.*

Accolades were also received, including one from Woodrow Lloyd, then leader of the Opposition in Saskatchewan:

> *I won't claim to be a wild-eyed enthusiast about Honourary Degrees but there are occasions when choices are made which justify the idea. Certainly the decision to make the award to you this year is one of those.*

When Graham learned that he would receive $150 from the University of Western Ontario for giving one lecture, he replied:

> *In my time, fees for lectures were almost unknown and I am not wholly adjusted to the pleasant shock of contemporary practices. I am at your command for any commitments you care to make for me. Broadcasting policy and French Canada have been life-long studies, for example, and I am always eager to hear what English Canadians have to say about Quebec. I make this comment, not because I am a compulsive speaker, but because I wish to justify the generous honorarium.*

In the summer of 1969 Graham and Irene holidayed in Greece, then went to London where Irene did some work for ACWW and had a hip operation. They were away for almost three months. This letter, dated 19 November, is to Jean Halton, with whom Graham stayed in London:

> *The only word with which I am able to begin is, of course, outrageous; it applies to my silence, wraps up several earlier attempts, and compels me to assure you and promise my conscience that wrapped or unwrapped, complete or incomplete, this letter will go to you.*
>
> *Why I have been unable to write any but the most businessy letters, I cannot explain. The pen has frightened me and the typewriter sent me scurrying. Will and energy have gone. But why? It is odd to say it, but somehow the second return to Canada has been more a surprise and minor problem than the first more than a year ago. Whatever the causes, I have been idle, except under compulsion, and vaguely lost, except when rescued in the midst of my vain wanderings. …*
>
> *Irene is very well, walks without cane or other aid, digs in the garden and works night and day. She begins usually around eight combining at the same instant radio listening, book or newspaper reading, coffee sipping and doubtless some letter or lecture writing; three or so nights a week she is at the university, and occasionally there are students or faculty brought to the house for discussions. … One a.m. or later ends her day; but she still has energy to work on two new books, one on prairie economic history, the other on general economic theory. The Champlain Society volume, a splendid fat, beautifully printed red volume, has arrived and adorns our shelves. It is the work of twelve years, not only in the archives of Canada and Britain but in New Zealand, Ceylon and goodness knows what other countries. And the reward? The book itself, of course. And the return? $500 and six free copies!*
>
> *As for myself, idleness is usual but not total. I have done a few broadcasts for the CBC and try to spur the Broadcasting League to some activity, but without much result. … Thank you for your infinite kindness and generosity. Your home meant very much to me in those uncertain London days and gave me very great pleasure. I wish, indeed, I could drop round the corner here and find that Oakhill had been moved to Rockcliffe and that you were nearby.*

*

On 24 January 1970 the *Ottawa Journal* ran this story:

> *To those with long memories at a private meeting held this week to discuss "the emerging and quickly changing Canadian broadcasting situation," it must have seemed like the 1930s all over again. There was Graham Spry, one of the founders of the Canadian Radio League which led the fight to make broadcasting an instrument of national purpose, rallying the troops in a new struggle for the old goals. … Graham Spry and the majority who attended the meeting reject broadcasting which, in Peers' words, "operates as an auxilliary to advertising" and treats man as essentially a consumer, a buyer of goods.*

Another reporter quipped: "If I were Spry I'd hire a bodyguard."

On Graham's seventieth birthday King Gordon sent him this poem:

To Graham Spry – on his 70th birthday.

In earlier days when he committed mayhem
This youthful reb. was simply known as Graham
Today – rebellious as in days gone by
He's happy to be designated Spry.

These letters were written to Irene, who was visiting various archives in the United States during the summer of 1970:

> *Encouraging sounds have come from official circles in several ways about the League.* My Toronto Star *article proves to have* [interested] *those with parallel ideas in the centres of power; it seems I am to be consulted secretly about some items of policy, and as you know I have been invited to the confidential seminar on cable and "the wired city." Further, the possibility of a grant for staff is not unlikely, or at least not impossible.*
>
> ***
>
> *The seminar on the wired city ended last evening about nine and I came home to read a little and begin a weekend of no thought, no reading, no writing. Tomorrow, Monday, I go into purdah – or some such retreat – and remain totally isolated here in the house for one week until I complete the first complete draft – there are several incomplete attempts – of my article for the* Journal of Contemporary History *on French Canada.*

To Mary Haslam, who worked for Graham in London and was still at Saskatchewan House, Graham wrote on 26 September 1970:

> *The Spry family are the worst correspondents in the world and I am the worst of the Sprys. We are always so busy; and I cannot understand why we do not resist, why* [we] *do not settle down and behave. I have never been busier. My firm conclusion is that it is much wiser not to*

> *retire; there is really much more to do working with yourself. My determined purpose is never to retire again. … I am writing about three or four things, two of them long, and of course there are also lectures, broadcasts, speeches and meetings. I am also doing some work for the Science Council of Canada, not, as you will realize, about science or about computers but about computers as a national information system. I have a long article on Quebec – some of it repetition you will recall – next January in the* Journal of Contemporary History, *London; a portion of a book on Donald Buchanan; another on Frank Underhill; two booklets on broadcasting, one of them with other aspects; and two other books have published contributions. As well as my room at home, as untidy as might be expected, I have an office and two people for the Broadcasting League, plus one or two part-time researchers; an office and facilities in the Science Council; and a bilingual girl who comes in when the rush is too much.*

To Frank Peers on 29 October he wrote:

> *This is just a note to hope that you have had time to look at some of the notices about the proposed 40th Anniversary meeting* [of the CBL] *on December 8 at the Chateau Laurier. The meeting is shaping up quite well. Mike Pearson will spend the day with us; Mr. Kierans will speak at the luncheon and the Secretary of State has also accepted. Geoff Andrew, President of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, will preside and Dr. Leon Katz, Professor of Physics at the University of Saskatchewan and member of the Science Council, will speak to us about a computer utility into which ultimately, of course, broadcasting will either have to fit or be in some way related. … Keeping the League going is difficult but not discouraging. It is difficult because we lack manpower and resources. It is encouraging, however, in that more and more organizations – not many, but significant ones – are affiliating and the old affiliates are remaining faithful. This also applies to our membership although, goodness knows, we do little enough for them. Other encouragement is the very private but very strong encouragement I get from various departments and agencies of the Government to the highest levels. Those who speak to me are eager to have some organization do something to stir up public opinion and produce interest for what I am sure will be a very ardent conflict in Parliament and, let us hope, in public between rival policies involving the great communications interests.*

M.J. Coldwell wrote to Graham on 19 December 1970, congratulating him on his forthcoming investiture into the Order of Canada:

> *I am delighted to learn that you are to be invested with the Companionship of the Order of Canada.*
>
> *This is a richly deserved honor and recognition of the many notable services you have rendered the people of Canada. May you live long to enjoy it!*

> *I was happy to see you both at King's surprise party which was almost a reunion of those who founded the CCF Party!*

*

On 30 December Graham went to London, Rome and Malta for a holiday. While he was away friends at the CBC organized a party in his honour. Billed as a testimonial, it was held in the Confederation Room of the West Block on Parliament Hill on 19 February 1971, a day before his seventy-first birthday. Gilbert Ryle came from England, Mike Pearson was master of ceremonies, Alan Plaunt's daughter, Frances Hall, sat at the head table, and 250 people – from University of Manitoba days in the 1920s to current ministers of the Crown – paid tribute to the man who had longed for, but been denied, a seat in Parliament. Of the CBC presidents, past and future, Alphonse Ouimet, George Davidson, Al Johnson, Pierre Juneau and Patrick Watson were present. Davidson Dunton, who was in Australia as chairman of the Canadian delegation at the Commonwealth Education Conference, sent his greetings.

In July 1971 Graham received off-prints of his article, "Canada: Notes on Two Ideas of Nation in Confrontation" published in the *Journal of Contemporary History*, and circulated them widely. Lord Taylor, who had helped resolve the doctors' strike and was now president of Memorial University of Newfoundland, responded:

> *I have now finished my careful study of "Canada: Notes on Two Ideas of Nation in Confrontation", and I have enjoyed it more than anything I have read about Canada for a very long time.*
>
> *It seems to me that you are talking perfect sense all the way through, and it looks to me as though Trudeau has got it right, which is a most consoling thought. I always suspected he was a very intelligent gentleman as well as a very shrewd one, and now I know. Have you got any spare copies of the thing? If so, let me have a few and I will place them in appropriate hands.*

Richard G. Gervais, executive assistant of the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons on the Constitution of Canada, had also received copies, and replied:

> *I wish to thank you very kindly for both copies of your article ... as well as "Wheare's Modern Constitution." I also want to thank you for the accompanying documents. All these will no doubt be useful material when helping to prepare our report.*
>
> *With your permission I would also like to distribute your "Notes on Two Ideas of Nation in Confrontation" to the members of our Steering Committee.*

*

Lib was studying in London in 1971-72 and Graham spent Christmas with her. Upon his return to Canada he wrote to Jean Halton:

> *Last winter we enjoyed or endured seemingly ceaseless snowfalls; this winter offers zero weather followed in succession by thaw and zero or at least freezing. Ottawa streets, and driveways, are then either slushy or sheets of glare ice full of perils for elderly hips. Our driveway offers about 25 feet of down sloping ice, the car is difficult to get out, and postie, and the news boy, and myself have only to stand at the top and toboggan into the garage. But last night it snowed, the ice has some soft cover and there is sun in a blue sky.*
>
> *I don't like this kind of icy winter and I don't like the varied jobs that rest upon me heavily and which I am not doing properly. In the next three weeks, I have five lectures at Carleton, a day's taping about the Radio League at Sir George Williams, a lecture at Loyola; several conferences, discussions and committee meetings. The League office sees me almost every day and I work at home, as well. Due to my increasing slowness, everything seems to take more and more time and there seems to be no escape from paper and pen. In sum, I want to get away again for a few weeks! This is a sure sign of decline: it is not quite four weeks since I returned from a holiday.*
>
> *Thank you once again for your manifold kindnesses and hospitality. You have a marvellous home and I treasure the welcomes you have so often given me: I cannot imagine London without your kindness as a focus. As usual, these words of thanks are slow in reaching you; instead of being prompt and lively, I am as you see slow and late.*

On 4 April 1972 Graham sent the following letter to the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA):

> *Will you please convey to your officers the deep gratitude of myself and my wife for all the pleasure that we enjoyed at the first Annual ACTRA Awards Banquet. It was a grand affair and flowed along happily as well as efficiently. The whole evening could not have been improved upon.*
>
> *I add of course my own personal thanks for the consideration ACTRA extended to me, and in particular the selection of myself by the committee for the John Drainie Award, adding my name to this glorious company of the apostles. The Award is already in the centre of my mantelpiece, and will be deeply treasured, though please regard it as not having been given to me individually, but to those who have long worked for the League.*

To Peter Pearson, a film maker and good friend of Rob's, Graham wrote on 31 May 1972:

> *This is the second reply I have written to your letter of the 22nd. I dictated what I am sure was a work of art but neglected to turn the dictating machine on. I hate to think what posterity has lost. Thanks for*

> *returning to Irene the two Ethel Wilson books. We are very glad to have them back.*
>
> *I hope you have a really good holiday in Spain and that things look better when you return. This is a difficult, difficult country, Canada, for those like you who have something to say and I suppose that there is nothing more difficult than the world where films are made. I keep turning over ideas in my enfeebled mind about how we could get the Canadian people to really put up money for programming. I have all sorts of impossible ideas, but the real horror is that we are spending the money now but not getting the production in Canada. But this is not a subject to be thought about when sunning in Spain.*

*

In January 1973 Bob Inch, who had shared the apartment on Daly Avenue in Ottawa in the 1930s with Graham, wrote:

> *Mike's death was a startling reminder, to me, that things will end. George Ferguson wrote me a few months ago: "Ties grow fewer as one gets older. People have a strange habit of dying which should be discouraged. The trouble is that the wrong people drop off and too many boobs are left. Just the same its nice to have known such types as Tory and Dafoe and one continues to miss them."*

The deaths of Graham's contemporaries – Woodrow Lloyd a few months earlier and now Mike Pearson (Graham was one of Pearson's honorary pallbearers) – saddened him deeply. What most people did not know, however, was that he was mentally and emotionally preparing himself for a far more devastating loss: Rich was very ill. In the winter of 1973, Rich and the family still did not know the nature of his illness; tests were being performed and diagnoses were being made. In May 1972 Graham told a friend that Rich had had a serious operation in Montreal. In July he told another friend that Rich had "developed some lymph gland trouble but it was not malignant."

In September, just before moving to Winnipeg to take a new position with the CBC, Rich was married at his parents' home in Rockcliffe; Graham was in France at the time. When Irene wrote to him about the wedding she added that Rich had "almost finished the second series of radiation treatments & seemed a bit tired but otherwise well."

In May 1973 Graham wrote to Irene, who was at a conference in Banff:

> *I was speaking to Rob Thurs. and heard that while Rich's blood count etc. do well that he had a cold and was back in hospital. This is the only word I have had for the week, but I hope you are in W'npeg and that good news will reach me. …* [I] *have been very busy either with the CBL imbroglio or telephone calls and letters here at home… However, I did have dinner one evening at Jacqueline's* [Southam] *… and last night King G.* [Gordon] *and Joe P.* [Parkinson] *plus myself went to*

> *Cascades on the Gatineau to chat over the LSR with the Hist. Assoc. of the Archives – young people mostly and a number of them know you, of course. … It was a chatty evening with King occupying well over half the time, to the great jealousy of the tender egoists, Joe and myself. … The Broadc. League continues to fill me with worry. As I expected, it (i.e., the office and conference organizers) spent money lavishly… A further member of the staff has been added without any consultation with the executive. … The Directors' meeting last Tues. started quietly but when the President told us a bank loan was being arranged, a number of us went off the deep end, notably Hugo McPherson and Dr. Laidlaw and, of course, myself. … I would get out if I did not feel duty bound both to the League's character and to those I persuaded to join the Board. … More cheerfully, let me say the garden, despite cloudy, rainy weather, is doing well. The hyacinths are numerous, the daffodils in the back are coming along, and the lily of the valley is well above ground but of course not yet budding. But dogs and newsp. boys have trodden on the hyacinths; these I pick up and put in water for my pleasure. …*
>
> *I have written Rich twice or more since you left. In my last letter, I mentioned to him that I would be going to Vancouver for a CBL gathering and that I could stop over west or east bound or both. I really must see him and it really hurts me deeply that I have been restrained from a visit earlier.*
>
> *Do give him my deepest love and let me know how he is progressing. My love to Dede, also, I can understand what an ordeal she has endured, but the last word I have had gives assurance that Rich is well on the mend.*

By July, however, Rich's condition was deteriorating, as this letter to Lord Taylor indicates:

> *All of the family have been out to see Richie and … we haven't much hope. He revived greatly in the past week and Irene was going on archiving in Saskatchewan, but there was a relapse and I am on my way out again in the next day or so. We are under no illusions, but of course, nourish the ordinary human hope.*

On 30 July 1973, Graham wrote to Irene in Winnipeg:

> *Y'r letter was most welcome and a help. And I thank you for our telephone chat on Sunday. This is the saddest moment of our life and we must bear it together.*

Rich died on 3 August 1973, in Winnipeg. He was buried in the Old Chelsea graveyard near Kingsmere.

Happier family news came at this time too. Robin and Carmel Dumas had married in June and soon Graham would be able to boast about and play with his first grandchild, Jeremy Spry.

*

After Rich's death, Irene went to England for a month, while Graham remained at home. The following letter to her is dated 28 August:

> *I have in fact seen quite a number of people, and had a busy two days in Toronto, first, at a League meeting, the second day doing a half hour chat on "This Country in the Morning" for CBC radio. I have also been up to Old Chelsea twice, yesterday to combine the annual sale with an examination of the stones placed on the grave. At the sale, I met Eleanor and Alison Strayer and was asked back to dinner: Barry is out west. Friday, four or five friends of Don Mowat and Patrick Gillespie dropped in and G's Irish group played the guitar and sang songs, some of them they had collected from old folk singers in the Ottawa Valley. This evening marked the end of Don and Pat's work in the basement, but Don proposes to continue until he goes to France shortly and will return later in September, if he receives another contract.* [Don Mowat and Patrick Gillespie were sorting Graham's papers on broadcasting.]
>
> *The above sounds as if I had been active and pleasantly occupied. In fact, I am lazy, depressed, and seem to be alone a very great deal, in an empty house. There is of course plenty to do, letters to acknowledge are still numerous and still flowing in, but I am very desultory in answering them. I take it you do not want me to send the flow about Richie to you: I open those addressed to me and when identifiable, a few addressed to us both, but those for you are left unopened. … I have not forgotten the Ferguson, Carver or Gordon invitations but there are League things I want to keep my eyes on and I also simply do not feel like wandering however pleasantly at the moment – and haven't the money either, for a few weeks. … Thank you for your note from the airport. I envy your capacity to write anywhere at anytime. …*
>
> *My love to … all friends en Angleterre. As for yourself, don't overdo yourself and admit the need for rest occasionally. … Jetty Robertson had Maryon Pearson & me to dinner this week.*

*

In August 1974 Irene went to Romania for the World Population conference, then to Australia for the ACWW conference. Graham wrote to her on 23 September.

> *The berries on the mountain ash are at their sharpest colour. The leaves on the maples are turning yellow. Red flowers alone brighten the front garden. Autumn is here. Winter is coming.*
>
> *It is a crisp, sunny mid-morning and I am dropping my modest but worrisome labours for the C.B. League at least to begin a long letter to you before I leave for lunch with the President and former Executive V.-President of the Cdn. Assoc. of Broadcasters. The President is Dr. Camu, chairman of your Board of Governors. As I wrote you, last week*

I had a lunch every day and it is the same this week … with the CBC Parliamentary trouble-shooter, & Eugene Forsey among others.

I spoke to Carmel and Rob yesterday with the murmurs and gurgles of Jeremy as the accompaniment. All are well. J. is crawling at great speed on all fours and aided by one finger on the floor, walks eagerly. Rob says he will be on two feet very soon and even more of a menace. Carmel's novel proceeds. Rob's film "Action" was very well received at Stratford but the NFB arranged no press coverage. … So much for the family news, except Lib. Her job with the Sec. of State office has not yet been arranged and she boringly awaits the word. She takes a hand with Jeremy when Rob & Carmel are out and has a voluntary association with a theatre group. …

Dianne & Mrs. Lloyd passed through, & I had two or three hours with them here or driving them to their stopping place miles away towards Bell's Corners, or as I felt, when driving back home, North Bay. The Arnold Smiths are here and were at lunch with the Ritchies when I was there last Saturday. Both the L's and S's were in splendid form but Arnold, of course, is uncertain about his next career – this, if he is not re-appointed, is his last year as Secretary General of the Commonwealth.

In May 1975 Graham wrote these letters to Irene, who was at a conference in Victoria:

My writing will be, I hope, more legible if I use and you forgive this classroom paper. First, thanks for y'r notes and the telephone call. This is my first reply and I will telephone on Sunday.

Since returning Monday, eastward as you hastened westward à la manière Spry – I have been busy with completing the application to the Canada Council. … The due date was Friday and I duly delivered the form. … I will not have an answer until Sept. [A successful application to hire a research assistant to organize Graham's personal papers so that he could write his memoirs.]

The Media 75 Conf. & the two dull CBL meetings occupied five days but I met many old press & TV friends & made, on the award evening, a short speech – the dinner gave me a standing welcome. … Five days of meetings tired me a lot and I think of getting away for a few days, perhaps the Fergusons or even Vermont … in the result, I'll probably end up still in 446 [Cloverdale Road].

The garden is doing well but the flowers last very short times. The lilac is at its peak & very good, except where some brown pest has spoiled it. Carmina keeps flowers around the house but I suspect gratefully that you left some of them.

Now to change & go to Peggy's flat. We go on to a movie later, if there is one suitable for four oldsters. I'll write more Sunday.

***

Peggy H. [Heeney] *selected "Shampoo" to see last night. Superficially – i.e. in its appeal to mass audiences – it was the most obscene, sexy and animal film or play I have ever seen. But in acting, staging, colour, character it was quite brilliant. In a deeper sense, the film, however, was an almost savage – yet strangely enough not bitter – criticism of American life & modern wealthy & playboy and youth of the age: a social document satirizing the mores of the declining Western world in a very contemporary western way. Yet it was in structure though not depth of situation, Greek at least in the unity of time, place and character. In time, all of it occurred the night the results of Nixon's election came over TV – throughout bar room, bed-room, board room scenes, Nixon or Agnew were seen on the screen. The whole thing was a cruel, yet also tolerant but terrible revelation of American – of prosperous, hedonistic life.*

I would never have picked "Shampoo" to see but I am pleased I saw its shiny horror and heard its incessant stream of four-letter words. …

Today, the new president of the CB League, Hugh Gillis, comes to town – he just phoned me from Halifax & I will meet his aircraft. I am relieved that he called in reply to my call and that he is not a party to the "cut Graham down to size" movement of long standing since Rainsberry and Primeau. The danger to the League now is the continuing weakness of the Ottawa members of the Executive & their excessive taste for wasteful expenditure and snap, ill-considered actions.

***

So the houses, the families and life potter along – led, of course, by Jeremy. When I appear he runs to me with welcoming arms and leaps smiling into my ardent embrace. He is a grand and vigorous lad; and also highly voluble if not yet exactly clear to his enchanted audiences.

The following two letters, written in October 1975, are both from Graham's longtime friend George Ferguson:

I've been writing the tale of my life, being bored by inactivity, and am reaching the point where Dafoe began getting interested in radio and, I think, gave you Ottawa lobbyists whatever help he could in the creation of public broadcasting. … I sometimes get so mad about all the chances the CBC misses although, by God, where would we be without it. I write this only a few miles from the U.S. border (we are at Georgeville) and thank God for CBC, with all its faults. At least, we have something!

***

In the process of writing about myself (and how egotistical it is getting to be) I'm arriving by slow degrees at the place where you enter the picture, for Dafoe and the Free Press, *plus my own predilections, made me*

> *a supporter from the very beginning, of the idea of public, as opposed to private, broadcasting in this country. I've been thinking a lot, therefore, of Alan Plaunt of Ottawa, who incidentally, should be the subject of a biography himself, and furthermore, it should be written by G. Spry, who, however, is far, far too lazy to put pen to paper.*
>
> *The fate of public broadcasting rests now, as always, in the hands of the CBC. I've been wondering whether you ever discuss this with Harry Boyle and CBC people, and even more I wonder if you will set that story down on paper before it's too late. The years are now snapping at our heels.*

Graham replied:

> *I have scarcely written a letter for weeks and yours too have been looking at me with disapproval. I am however at the moment twisted up with fibrositis and have been just incapable of writing at all. … I have six thousand files in the basement and there is all sorts of stuff, so Frank Peers tells me, about the early radio days and certainly about J.W. Dafoe. Give me a little time and I'll see what I have.*

On Graham's seventy-sixth birthday Harry Boyle, now chairman of the CRTC, sent this note:

> *We sent you flowers! How totally inadequate! It should have been a case of Scotch and a list of the millions of people who have benefited by your vigilance during the years.*
>
> *I am reminded so forcibly of your contribution now because of the forces at work in the bureaucratic towers who are trying to shape a new legislative act concerning what is more and more being called telecommunications. Rush it through! That's the tactic and enshrine the power of technology over people.*
>
> *I can assure you that it is not going to happen without a fight. That's my birthday present to you.*

In 1976 Graham was given an honorary degree by York University, along with J.K. Galbraith, Syl Apps, Celia Franca, Frank Scott and Gerald LeDain – Vincent Massey attended "to cheer." Graham thanked the chancellor of York, Walter Gordon:

> *Irene is off all day today lecturing and otherwise participating at Montebello in a meeting of the Quebec Mining Association but on her behalf as well as my own may I send thanks, the deepest possible thanks, for the honour you conferred on me and the numerous courtesies we enjoyed throughout our happy visit to York University and Atkinson College. The arrangements, if I may say so, were all quite admirable. And in the sunshine the Convocation itself was really a glorious affair. Thank you for your very great consideration and kindness and of course gratitude to Liz for being there.*

Harry Boyle commented on Graham's speech:

> *As usual, your remarks at York were to the point and interesting. ... I would like in the fall to arrange a session with you and the Commission. It would be informal, but I do want the new members to absorb some of the continuity of concern that exists in this country about broadcasting.*

On 15 June George Ferguson wrote again:

> *My apologies for not answering more quickly your letter now a month old. Few enough people write to me that I should be so remiss.*
>
> *I was interested and excited by learning you're "getting at" your papers. As I've said to you so often, you have a real story to tell. There might not even be a CBC for people to rail at without you! ...*
>
> *I am tapping away slowly at my contribution to Canadian culture – the story of an immigrant boy who learned how to be a Canadian (or thought he did) and thanks to J.W. Dafoe, at that. From him, most things in my life have flowed. The longer I live, the greater he becomes in my mind.*
>
> *Forgive me pressing my point, though I think you'd agree that procrastination has been one of your faults!*
>
> *I don't want to be importunate, but I still maintain your interest in broadcasting have been* [sic] *– and your files – deserve more recognition and research than they have up to now.*

Graham replied on 21 June:

> *I've had your last note for several days. As the enclosed shows, an earlier note has been on my conscience for a whole month. ... I agree about the term "procrastination" when it comes to long pieces of writing. I am quite clearly a small bit and bite type of ex-reporter. However the mountains of paper referred to in my notes attached are being attacked and in recent months, mainly the last three and I have accumulated over 300 quarto pages of typed drafts as well as a supply of Xerox stuff which we can fiddle about with in pasted up dummies.*
>
> *This sounds all very well but I am under no illusions. There is really nothing I have written that I would want to see daylight. What does encourage me however is the actual letters exchanged years ago.*

Elizabeth Smart wrote to Graham on 6 July 1976, saying: "I was very pleased to hear from you. ... but you forgot to enclose the *Forum* cutting." Graham started a reply in August but did not finish it until November. Graham's letter refers to Paddye Mann, who had been hired to help him write his memoirs. The *Forum* article was about Elizabeth Smart:

> *Business or literary history first – yes, I am assured by Paddye that the* Forum *was found and the review despatched. Paddye swore an Irish oath of Newfoundland origin that she sent it long ago.*

> *It was a good review, one of the best I thought. … You have, dear Betty, written one of the real books of our generation. … The need, as declining years thrust the problems of living more roughly upon us, the need as I have felt it, is the intimacy of the truly close and sympathetic group with a body of common interests, wide enough to span many pleasures, tastes, causes and of course some enfranchising follies. Can you find such a society here? I do, richly even satisfyingly. But travel and escape and Europe – England, France, Italy, Greece – places even alone round me out – these are from time to time essential. … I leave for England around Nov. 20 and will go to Christ Church, Oxford, to be present at a memorial service for Gilbert Ryle on Nov. 27, at 12 noon.*
>
> *My letter leaving address in London will be the Travellers Club… You must save some time for me, please.*
>
> *I will then head for Mediterranean warmth for a week or two.*

Before receiving this letter from Graham, Elizabeth had written again, on 20 October:

> *I was very pleased to get a letter from you even if it was only two post cards (but nice postcards, ring-a-bell post cards). I was shattered though to hear about Richard. No word no slightest rumour had reached me all this time of this tragic thing. What did he have? Losing a child must be the greatest horror and one I have been spared. My heart goes out to you. With your letter came some pale yellow irises and Bach was playing on the radio. I planted the irises and feel they will always remind me of the little Chelsea graveyard. Yes I would like to join you all there but I guess I'll have to take pot luck where I drop. I have been thinking of you too because I know you will be grieving for Gilbert Ryle your old friend. I thought of him often and often had conversations with him in my head though I've only seen him once I think in thirty or more years. Conversation can go on, I suppose, but heaven seems a lot further off than Oxford. I felt glad that he was at your birthday celebrations not long ago.*
>
> *You speak of your voluminous files. But what about a breezy memoir? … I've managed to squeeze out a small prose thing and a small set of verse things, which are in the hands of publishers. But mostly I furiously garden, an interesting kind of madness infinitely absorbing. But about the most ephemeral thing you can do. I am always trying to get at least a reminder of the gorgeous gaudy Canadian falls, and I have managed to make a few trilliums happy here. I wonder if those plants I dug up with you for Irene settled down in Rockcliffe. This is a lovely time of year with no visitors and long strenuous days planning new horticultural delights, with swift trips on my moped for supplies (mostly cigarettes) and the wonderful Radio 3 giving out fantastic music all day long. …*
>
> *Yes, thank you, I got the* Forum *article "Smart Lives!" – that pleased*

> *me. Except for the huffing and puffing I like being old. What one misses desperately are contemporaries as they are so few and get fewer. So one tries to cherish those that remain. My friends seem to get younger and younger. Some are quite a bit younger than my own children. Lovely, but still … they are embarrassed if age is mentioned and yet there are so many interesting things about it, and many advantages. People aren't so frightened or suspicious of you. You don't need so much sleep. It is lovely to wake up at five in the morning or even earlier and read gardening books or poems and have several slim breakfasts and make lists before the music starts at 7.*
>
> *I hope that having put pen to paper this correspondence on both sides may now continue. I look forward to receiving that 3 or 4 page letter you mentioned so tantalizingly.*

To Jean Halton, on 16 December 1976, Graham wrote:

> *This is a promise of a letter of thanks in due course. I've been back several days and have yet to write a single letter of appreciation and pleasure to you my hostess or to anyone else. Indeed, two days of the week days I've been here have been dominated by a coast-to-coast radio broadcast involving the Minister of Communications, Jeanne Sauvé, and what seemed to be hundreds and hundreds of other people all wanting to talk at once. The only good thing about my own intervention was that at the end I got quite wrought up and said that we were wasting our time and all talking nonsense. I'm sure this was the one accurate thing said in the whole day.*
>
> *I can't tell you how much I enjoyed all your kindnesses and hospitality, but, as I said already, this is not a letter of thanks. You'll have to be patient: it will come later.*

Elizabeth Smart wrote again in February 1977:

> *Thank you so very much for sending me Margaret Atwood's book which I think is marvellous and enjoyed enormously. I should love to see any others of hers and especially her poems. Thank you also for the copy of* By Grand Central *which was most welcome and needed right now, though there are plans afoot for another paperback edition and also a new hardbook to coincide with my new prose book.*
>
> *I enclose an advance copy of my poems for your bithday. It comes out 26 Feb. I think you came out 24 – is it not so? Hope you enjoy them. …*
>
> *Snowdrops, Winter Aconites, cyclamen, crocuses, and anemones out in the garden, for today the long freeze-up seems to have eased up … and spring seems a not impossible event to come.*

Sadly, as Elizabeth had noted in her letter of 20 October, "contemporaries are few and get fewer": on 3 April Graham received a note from Mary Ferguson saying that George had died of a stroke.

*

In May 1980 Irene was in western Canada. Graham told her that he was going to Montreal to watch the results of the referendum with Frank and Marian Scott. When Frank called to invite Graham he said "let old friends be together to observe the end of, the possible end of, a splendid nation." On 21 May Graham told Irene that, "The results of the voting were about right – a clear victory for Canada."

*

In April 1982 Irene was in Cambridge while Graham was in Italy. Graham wrote:

> *I am glad I came but I find myself rather wearied and indeed isolated, isolated from you, just where you are, how your searches proceed and how your eye is behaving. Indeed, if the airways could have changed the ticket, without absurd expense, I would have flown back to London and sought out your whereabouts and your voice. ... We* [will] *be meeting soon, soon and that will be very welcome indeed, indeed.*

In October 1982 Graham and Irene travelled to Sackville, New Brunswick. Graham, with three others who had made a significant contribution to public broadcasting in Canada – Mavor Moore, Al Johnson and Don Herron – was given an honorary doctorate from Mount Allison University.

In June 1983 Graham was at Oxford. To Irene he wrote:

> *This is where I have been for three days in the college where Richard, Robin and I were students. A thousand or more Rhodes scholars ... are here until June 30. It has been a happy and splendidly organized gathering.*

*

Graham died quietly in his sleep on 24 November 1983. This letter, from Eugene Forsey, was written to Irene the next day:

> *This is dreadful news, and still seems quite incredible. The last time I saw Graham, only a few weeks ago, he looked as if he had another twenty years ahead of him.*
>
> *It is, of course, a mercy that he was spared long, painful and disabling illness. But what a fearful shock for you and the family: and what an immeasurable loss!*
>
> *But, also, what a life he had! Filled with selfless service to his country and to good causes. What an example he has left to all of us, especially the young!*
>
> *The flag at the CBC head office is at half-mast. Well it might be! Many an individual inner flag is at half-mast also.*

Epilogue

On 24 January 1988, four years after Graham's death, Irene received this letter from Judge Eric Diehl, of the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan:

> *Recently I read of your Distinguished Canadian Award in the Spring 1987* Canadian Plains Bulletin. *I join with many others in extending my congratulations to you.*
>
> *Were it not for your late husband I may never have been writing this letter to you. Around 1952-53 I was in London, England, having worked my passage there from New Zealand in a merchant ship. ... I was a teacher in New Zealand, did some teaching in London as well as visiting slum schools in Glasgow. I ran out of money and decided that Canada looked a hopeful place for teaching – I'd seen an advertisement for teachers for Leader School Unit...*
>
> *Thus I went to Saskatchewan House and met that remarkable person Graham Spry. I was immediately infected by his enthusiasm for life, his obvious love for Saskatchewan, and his unexpressed view that there were no problems in life – only opportunities. Through the years, I have often thought about this man who, though I was an absolute stranger, accepted me at face value, boosted my feelings of self-worth, and imparted to me a feeling of warmth about Canada that has never left me, and has been fortified by my experiences in Saskatchewan.*
>
> *I accepted the teaching position in Leader School Unit. I told Graham that I had little money and even less time to convert it from the sterling area to dollars – remember the days! – Graham pulled out his cheque book ... & offered me a series of cheques drawn on the Bank in Saskatchewan... I was dumbfounded!!*
>
> *I've never forgotten that moment, and think of it with warmth every time. Apart from another couple of contacts with Graham before I sailed from Southampton a few days/weeks later, he dropped out of my life – or so I thought. Memories won't leave me alone.*
>
> *It was not until years later in Saskatchewan that I again heard, and read, of his interest in broadcasting that led to the formation of the* CBC.
>
> *But what, you say, did I do with those cheques of his? I didn't. I remember the moment as clearly as yesterday. When I said that he*

didn't know me, and may never see me again, he said that he trusted me, and that I would pay him back whenever I had the money! … Dumbfounded, all I could do was look at this smiling man across or around the desk in his office. He had sparked such a confidence by me in myself by that singularly extraordinary gesture of generosity that I knew that I could do the whole trip on my own resources and resourcefulness. When I turned him down, he didn't express surprise, and we went on with the business at hand. I remember the details well – but will get on with my story.

I paid for my passage from England (in sterling) on the Greek Shipping Line SS Columbia. *I bought my CPR train ticket and meal tickets from Quebec City to Swift Current also in sterling at CP in London! I drew out my miserably small balance of sterling left over, from the National Bank of New Zealand in London, and spent the lot on "vouchers" … which could only be used as shipboard currency on board the SS* Columbia. *On shore they were valueless – in England or Canada!*

While crossing the Atlantic I bought food, booze, cigarettes and other personal items for any Canadian who was sympathetic to, and intrigued by, my plight, and I paid in "vouchers." The Canadians paid me in real folding Beaver dollars, and by the time we landed at Quebec City, I had converted all my sterling (as little as it was) to Canadian dollars! How's that for by-passing red tape!

All of these fond recollections and a host of other memorable Canadian opportunities and experiences seem to hinge in my memory on that remarkable man, Graham Spry. God bless him.

Biographical Notes

Aberhart, William. (1878-1943) A radio evangelist, known as "Bible Bill," he was the premier of Alberta from 1935 until his death in 1943 and, as such, leader of Canada's first Social Credit government.

Aird, Sir John. (1855-1938) A banker who in 1924 became president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce. In 1928 the government of Mackenzie King appointed him chairman of the Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting. The Aird Report, issued in 1929, recommended that a public body regulate private broadcasters and air its own programs.

Ames, Sir Herbert Brown. (1863-1954) Ames was a Montreal businessman who wrote books about, and worked for, civic reform. He was elected a Montreal alderman in 1989, he served as a Conservative MP from 1904 to 1920, and from 1919 to 1926, he was financial director of the secretariat of the League of Nations in Geneva. His book, *The City Below the Hill* (1897), is one of the earliest sociological descriptions of the working-class districts of Montreal.

Argue, Hazen Robert. (1921-1991) He was MP from 1945 to 1963 for Assiniboia, Sask. and became House leader of the eight-member CCF caucus in 1958. In 1960 he was elected national leader of the CCF. When the CCF and the CLC formed the NDP in 1961, Tommy Douglas defeated Argue for the leadership. Six months later Argue resigned from the NDP charging that the unions had too much power; he was re-elected to the Commons in 1962 as a Liberal but was defeated in 1963. Argue was named to the Senate in 966 and appointed to Pierre Trudeau's Cabinet in 1980 as minister of state responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board.

Barbeau, Charles Marius. (1883-1969) Barbeau worked at the National Museum (now the Museum of Civilization) from 1911 to the late 1960s, collecting a vast archive of traditional songs, texts and artifacts – especially of French Canadian and Native peoples. He developed his interest in anthropology while at Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship. He received many honours, including being made a Companion of the Order of Canada, and published several prizewinning books, including *Folk Songs of French Canada* (1925) (co-written with Edward Sapir); *The Downfall of Temlaham* (1928); and *Quebec: Where Ancient France Lingers* (1936).

Beck, Sir Adam. (1857-1925) As mayor and then Conservative MPP for London, Ontario, Beck dominated Ontario politics for a generation as he built and expanded the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission into the largest publicly owned power authority in the world.

Bennett, Viscount Richard Bedford. (1870-1947) After graduating from Dalhousie in 1893, Bennett went to Calgary and became a law partner of Senator James Lougheed. He began his political career in 1898 when he won election as a

Conservative to the Assembly of the North-West Territories. In 1911 he went to Ottawa as the Conservative member for Calgary East but became bored when Prime Minister Borden did not appoint him to the Cabinet and did not stand for re-election in 1917. In 1921, Arthur Meighen named him minister of Justice. Bennett was defeated in the 1921 general election but won in 1925 in Calgary West and was minister of Finance in Meighen's brief 1926 government. Bennett won the Conservative leadership in 1927 and led the party until 1938. He was Canada's eleventh prime minister from 1930 to 1935. He left Canada in 1938, a bitter man, to live out his life in England. When Graham met him on the street in London one day in 1938 or 1939, he said: "Well Graham, here am I in London an exile from the right, here you are in London, an exile from the left."

Bethune, Dr. Henry Norman. (1890-1939) Bethune was a surgeon, an inventor and a political activist. After a visit to the Soviet Union in 1935, Bethune joined the Communist Party and it was this commitment that led him to offer his services to the Civil War in Spain effort in 1936. He returned to Canada in 1937 to raise money for the antifascist cause in Spain and soon turned his attention to the war being waged by communist forces against the Japanese invaders in China. Bethune left Canada for the last time in 1938 to join the 8th Route Army in the Shanxi-Hobei border region. His accidental death from septicemia evoked Mao Zedong's essay "In Memory of Norman Bethune" which urged all communists to emulate his spirit of internationalism, sense of responsibility and devotion to others and was one of three prescribed articles during the Cultural Revolution.

Bevan, Aneurin (Nye). Labour MP for the constituency of Ebbw Vale in Wales. Colourful and outspoken leader of the left wing of the British Labour Party; a close associate of Sir Stafford Cripps. Minister of Health in the 1945 Labour Government and architect of the British National Health Service.

Borden, Sir Robert Laird. (1854-1937) The eighth prime minister of Canada, Borden was a Halifax lawyer, leader of the Liberal-Conservative Party 1901-20, architect of the Conservative victory in the "Reciprocity Election" of 1911, prime minister during World War I and a leading figure in the achievement of "dominion status" and the transition from the British Empire to the British Commonwealth of Nations. As leader of the Canadian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, he was primarily responsible for international recognition of the autonomous status of the dominions. In his last years he was recognized as an international statesman and firm advocate of the League of Nations. He served as chancellor of Queen's from 1924 to 1930.

Boyle, Harry J. (1915-) Harry Boyle joined the CBC in Toronto in 1942 and held various positions, including radio producer and department head until 1968 when he left to join the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission. He was chairman of the commission in 1976-77.

Bracken, John. (1883-1969) In 1920, Bracken moved to Manitoba, joined the Progressive movement, became premier in 1922 and remained so for two decades. In 1942 the Conservative Party called on him to be leader, a task he accepted on condition the party add "Progressive" to its name. In the 1945 election the party was defeated and he resigned in 1948.

Brownlee, John Edward. (1883-1961) Brownlee moved to Calgary in 1909, became solicitor for the fledgling United Farmers of Alberta and played an important part in the amalgamation of United Grain Growers in 1917. When the UFA won the 1921 Alberta election, he became attorney general and helped organize the

Alberta Wheat Pool. He was premier from 1925 to 1935 when the UFA lost to the Social Credit.

Cadbury, George W. Heir to the Cadbury chocolate fortune. British socioeconomic planner (MA Cantab). Active in the British Labour Party. Organizer and first chairman of the Saskatchewan Economic Advisory and Planning Board (1945-51) during the first two terms of the CCF government of T.C. Douglas.

Charlesworth, Hector W. (1872-1945) A Toronto newspaperman and arts commentator and editor of *Saturday Night* magazine before being appointed the first head of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission in 1932.

Clarkson, Dr. Graham. Saskatchewan physician and medical director of the Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Commission during the medicare crisis.

Claxton, Brian Brooke. (1898-1960) Claxton graduated from McGill in Law in 1921 having served overseas in World War I. He was an active member of the Association of Canadian Clubs, the Canadian Radio League, the League of Nations Society, and the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. He was elected as a Liberal MP in 1940 and soon after was appointed parliamentary secretary to Prime Minister King. As minister of Health and Welfare he was responsible for the introduction of family allowances and as minister of Defence he supervised the rebuilding of the Canadian Armed Forces during and after the Korean War. In 1954 he retired from politics to become general manager of Metropolitan Life and in 1957 was appointed first Chairman of the Canada Council.

Coldwell, Major James Williams (M.J.). (1888-1974) Teacher, politician, one of the founders of the CCF. He was MP for Rosetown-Biggar (Sask.) from 1935-58. He succeeded J.S. Woodsworth as national CCF leader, 1942-60.

Coyne, James Elliott. (1910-) Banker, businessman, Coyne was governor of the Bank of Canada from 1955 to 1961.

Cripps, Sir Richard Stafford. (1889-1952) Lawyer, British Ambassador to Russia (1940-42); Lord Privy Seal and leader of the House of Commons (1942); minister of Aircraft Production (1942-45). He was president of the Fabian Society in 1951.

Dafoe, John Wesley. (1866-1944) Journalist and liberal reformer. He was editor of the *Manitoba*, later *Winnipeg Free Press* from 1901 until his death. One of the most influential Canadian journalists.

Davidson, George. (1909-) Public servant, president of the CBC from 1968 to 1972.

Denison, Merrill. (1893-1975) Playwright, journalist, writer and historian. English Canada's first important twentieth-century playwright.

Diefenbaker, John George. (1895-1979) Lawyer and politician. In 1957 he led the Conservative Party to victory and became Canada's thirteenth prime minister. In 1963 his government was defeated by Lester Pearson and the Liberals.

Douglas, T.C. (Tommy). (1904-1986) Baptist minister, politician. As CCF premier of Saskatchewan for seventeen years from 1944, Douglas led the first socialist government ever elected in North America. He introduced socialized medicine to Canada and was the first leader of the federal New Democratic Party. His biography, *The Road to Jerusalem*, by Thomas H. McLeod and Ian McLeod was published in 1987.

Drainie, John. (1916-1966) Actor. The Drainie Award is presented annually by ACTRA for "Distinguished contribution to broadcasting."

Drew, George Alexander. (1894-1973) Lawyer and politician. Drew became the Conservative Premier of Ontario in 1943; he was elected party leader of the national Conservative Party in 1948 and after two unsuccessful attempts to beat the Liberals he resigned from politics. In 1957 he was appointed Canadian high commissioner to London.

Eliason, Frank. Long-time secretary of the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan section) and active supporter of the Saskatchewan CCF.

Ferguson, George Victor. (1897-1977) Newspaper editor. Ferguson joined the *Manitoba Free Press* in 1925, after three years at Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship, and succeeded J.W. Dafoe as executive editor in 1944. He later joined the *Montreal Star* as editor in chief where he remained until retirement. Like Dafoe, Ferguson was a strong and outspoken nationalist.

Forsey, Eugene. (1904-1991) Intellectual, senator, and inveterate writer of letters to the editor. Forsey attended McGill, Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship, was a founding member of the League for Social Reconstruction and the CCF. He was appointed, by Prime Minister Trudeau, to the Senate in 1970. His memoirs, *A Life on the Fringe*, were published by Oxford University Press in 1990.

Fowler, Robert MacLaren (Bob). (1906-1980) Lawyer. Fowler attended the University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall, was president of the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association and chaired the Royal Commission on Broadcasting in 1956 and a federal committee on broadcasting in 1965.

Fulton, Davie. (1916-) Lawyer and politician. Fulton, a Conservative, was first elected to the House of Commons in 1945; he was appointed minister of Justice in 1957; and in 1963 he was elected leader of the British Columbia Conservatives. In 1965 he returned to federal politics. From 1973 to 1981 he served as justice of the British Columbia Supreme Court.

Gordon, John King. (1900-1989) Studied at the University of Manitoba, at Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship, and at the Union Theological Seminary. Gordon was a founding member of the League for Social Reconstruction and the CCF. He was managing editor of *The Nation* in New York from 1944 to 1947 then joined the UN, serving in Korea, the Middle East and the Congo. After 1962 he taught international relations at the universities of Alberta and Ottawa and was chairman of CUSO.

Gordon, Walter. (1906-1987) A partner in the family firm, Clarkson Gordon and Co., Gordon served in the Bank of Canada and the Department of Finance during World War II. He ran for the federal Liberals and, in 1963, became minister of Finance in the Pearson Government. He resigned following the general election in 1965 but was returned to Cabinet as president of the Privy Council in 1967. He resigned in 1968.

Heeney, Arnold. (1902-1970) Public servant and diplomat. Educated at the University of Manitoba and Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship, Heeney was a lawyer in Montreal before being invited to serve Prime Minister King as principal secretary in 1938, then as clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the Cabinet. In 1949 he became undersecretary of state for External Affairs, then served as ambassador to NATO, and twice in Washington. He was chairman of the Civil Service Commission and Canadian head of the International Joint Commission and Permanent Joint Board on Defence.

Hepburn, Mitchell (Mitch). (1896-1953) Politician. Hepburn was first a federal

Liberal MP winning the election in 1926 and 1930, then became leader of the Ontario provincial Liberal Party and served as premier until 1942.

Herridge, William Duncan (Bill). (1888-1961) Lawyer and behind-the-scenes politician. Herridge was the brother-in-law of Prime Minister R.B. Bennett and served as Bennett's minister to the United States from 1931 to 1935. He wrote many of Bennett's speeches and helped to formulate Conservative strategy.

Howe, C.D. (1886-1960) Engineer and politician. Howe entered federal politics as a Liberal in 1935. He was made minister of Transport in 1936 (creating Trans-Canada Airlines), then minister of Munitions and Supply during World War II. In the 1950s, as minister of Trade and Commerce, his short-tempered responses during the pipeline debate helped to undermine his government's position. Both Howe and the Liberals were defeated in 1957.

Jamieson, Donald Campbell. (1921-1986) Broadcaster, politician and diplomat. Founder of a communications empire in Newfoundland, Jamieson was elected to the House of Commons as a Liberal in 1966 serving in the cabinet, in several portfolios, from 1968 to 1979. He was appointed Canada's High Commissioner to Great Britain in 1983.

Johnson, A.W. (1923-) Senior civil servant in Saskatchewan and Ottawa before being appointed President of the CBC 1975-1982.

Juneau, Pierre. (1922-) Career civil servant, president of the CBC from 1982-89.

Kent, Tom. (1922-) Journalist and public servant. Kent was editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press* from 1954 to 1959. In 1963 he became Pearson's principal political advisor, then served as deputy minister of Manpower and Immigration and Regional Economic Expansion. In 1980 he headed a royal commission on the press.

Kierans, Eric. (1914-) Economist, politician and businessman. Kierans was first an MPP in Jean Lesage's Liberal government in Quebec, then minister of Communications and postmaster general of Canada in Trudeau's Liberal cabinet, from 1968 to 1971.

King, William Lyon Mackenzie. (1874-1950) Leader of the federal Liberal Party from 1919 to 1948 and prime minister of Canada from 1921 to 1930 (except for a few weeks in 1926) and from 1935 to 1948.

Lalonde, Marc. (1929-) Lawyer, politician. Lalonde was a special advisor to both Pearson and Trudeau before running for Parliament in 1972. He held various cabinet portfolios including minister of Health and Welfare, minister of state for Federal-Provincial Relations, minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, and minister of Finance.

LaMarsh, Julia Verlyn (Judy). (1924-1980) Lawyer, politician and broadcaster. LaMarsh was a member of Pearson's Liberal Government from 1960 to 1968; minister of National Health and Welfare from 1963 to 1965; and secretary of state from 1965 to 1968.

Lamontagne, Maurice. (1919-1983) Economist, politician. Lamontagne was an advisor to Pearson from 1958 to 1963, was elected to Parliament in 1963 and served as president of the Privy Council and secretary of state before being appointed to the Senate in 1967.

Lapointe, Ernest. (1876-1941) Politician. Lapointe was elected a Liberal MP in 1904 and remained in Parliament until his death serving as minister of Marine and Fisheries (1921-24) and minister of Justice (1924-30, 1935-41).

Lloyd, Woodrow S. (1913-1972) Lloyd was minister of Education in Douglas's CCF government in Saskatchewan from 1944 to 1960 before succeeding Douglas as premier in 1961. He was defeated by Ross Thatcher and the Liberals in 1964, resigned as leader in 1970, and left politics a year later.

Lower, Arthur. (1889-1988) Historian. Professor at Wesley College in Winnipeg from 1929 to 1947 and Douglas Professor of Canadian History at Queen's from 1947 to 1959.

Luce, Clare Boothe. (1903-1987) American playwright, congresswoman, ambassador. Author of *The Women* published in 1937.

Macdonald, Ramsay. (1866-1937) Leader of the Labour Party and prime minister of Great Britain in 1924 and again from 1929 to 1935.

MacKenzie, Norman (Larry). (1894-1986) MacKenzie was with the International Labour Office in Geneva before beginning an academic carec: he taught law at the University of Toronto, was president of the University of New Brunswick (1940-44) and the University of British Columbia (1944-62). He was appointed to the Senate in 1966, retiring in 1969.

Macphail, Agnes. (1890-1954) Politician. Macphail was the only women elected to Parliament in 1921, the first federal election in which women had the vote. She first sat as a member of the Progressive Party with which the United Farmers of Ontario was then affiliated. She later sat as an independent and finally as a representative of the CCF. She was defeated in 1940. In 1943 she was elected to the Ontario Legislature representing the CCF.

Massey, Vincent. (1887-1967) Politician, diplomat, governor general. Massey spent one year in Mackenzie King's cabinet in 1925; from 1935 to 1946 he was Canada's high commissioner to Britain; in the late 1940s he co-chaired the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Science; in 1952 he became Canada's first native-born governor general serving in that position until 1959.

Michener, Roland. Lawyer, politician, governor general. Michener was an Ontario MPP from 1945 to 1948, a Conservative MP from 1953 to 1962, speaker of the House from 1957 to 1962; high commissioner to India (1964-67); and governor general from 1967 to 1974.

Murray, W.E. Gladstone. (1893-1970) Murray graduated from McGill University and was a Rhodes Scholar from 1913-14. After serving in World War I he was a correspondent for the *Daily Express* for two years and then was publicity director for the League of Nations for two years. From 1924-35 he worked for the British Broadcasting Corporation then was hired as general manager of the CBC, a position he held from 1936-42. In 1942 he was named director-general of broadcasting for Canada. One year later he resigned to set up his own business to foster and promote free enterprise.

Nicholson, A.M. (Sandy). (1900-1991) United Church minister, CCF MP and later minister for Social Welfare and Rehabilitation in the Saskatchewan Government from 1960 to 1964.

Ouimet, Alphonse. (1908-) An engineer, Ouiment joined the CRBC (later the CBC) in 1934, became general manager in 1953 and president in 1958. He resigned in 1967.

Pearson, Lester B. (Mike). (1897-1972) Statesman, politician, public servant.

Pearson joined the Department of External Affairs in 1928; he served with the Canadian High Commission in London from 1935 to 1941; in 1942 he was sent to Washington and named Canadian ambassador to the United States in 1945. In 1948 he became minister of External Affairs; in 1958 he was elected leader of the Liberal Party and in 1963, prime minister. He retired in 1968.

Pickersgill, Jack. (1905-) Public servant, politician, historian. Pickersgill was an assistant to prime ministers King and St. Laurent. In 1952 he became clerk of the Privy Council, then secretary of state. He held two portfolios in the Pearson government and was appointed President of the Canadian Transportation Commission when he left politics in 1967.

Plaunt, Alan. (1904-1941) Co-founder of the Canadian Radio League; appointed to the Board of Broadcast Governors of the CBC in 1936. (1917-1982) Elected Conservative MPP in Ontario in 1951; entered the Cabinet in 1958; and sworn in as premier in 1961, retiring in 1970.

Robarts, John. (1917-1982) Elected Conservative MPP in Ontario in 1951; entered the Cabinet in 1958; sworn in as premier in 1961, retiring in 1970.

Robertson, Norman. (1904-1968) Public servant, diplomat. Robertson joined the Department of External Affairs in 1929 and in 1941 became undersecretary. He was high commissioner to London from 1946 to 1949 and from 1952 to 1957, and ambassador to Washington in 1957.

Scott, Frank. (1899-1985) Poet, professor of Law. Co-founder of the League for Social Reconstruction (LSR) in 1931; one of the authors of the Regina Manisfesto and *Social Planning for Canada*. He became dean of Law at McGill in 1961; was a member of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. His *Collected Poems* (1981) won the Governor General's Award for poetry.

Sharp, Mitchell. (1911-) Public servant, politician. Sharp joined the Department of Finance in 1942, transferring to Trade and Commerce in 1951. He was elected to Parliament in 1963 and became minister of Trade and Commerce, then Finance, in Pearson's government. In 1968 he became Trudeau's minister of External Affairs, then president of the Privy Council before retiring from active politics in 1978.

Smart, Elizabeth. (1913-1986) Novelist, poet. Best known for her first semi-biographical work, *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* published in 1945. Also well known for her affair with British poet, George Barker, who fathered her four children.

St. Laurent, Louis. (1882-1973) Lawyer, politician, prime minister. St. Laurent was president of the Canadian Bar Associaiton in 1930. In 1942 he was elected to Parliament and served the government of Mackenzie King as minister of state for External Affairs before succeeding King as leader of the Liberal Party and prime minister in 1948. In 1957 his government was defeated by Diefenbaker's Conservatives and in 1958 he retired from public life.

Taschereau, L.A. (1867-1952) Lawyer, politician. Taschereau was premier of Quebec, 1920-1936.

Thatcher, Ross. (1917-1971) Politician. Thatcher was elected CCF member of Parliament in 1945, 1949 and 1953. He then left the party, sat first as an independent, then as a Liberal. He ran unsuccessfully in the federal elections in 1957 and 1958. In 1959 be became the provincial Liberal leader in Saskatchewan and premier in 1964.

Trudeau, Pierre E. (1919-) prime minister of Canada from 1968 to 1979 and from 1980 to 1984.

Underhill, Frank. (1889-1971) Historian, political thinker. Underhill, along with Frank Scott, founded the League for Social Reconstruction (LSR) in 1931 and was principal author of the CCF's Regina Manisfesto. After serving in World War I, he taught history at the University of Saskatchewan until 1927, then at the University of Toronto until 1955 when he accepted the position of curator at Laurier House in Ottawa.

Vanier, Georges. (1888-1967) Diplomat, governor general. After serving in World War I, Vanier entered the diplomatic service representing Canada at the League of Nations, in London and in France before being named ambassador to France in 1944. He remained in that position until his retirement in 1953. In 1959 he was appointed governor general.

Wilson, Cairine. (1885-1962) Canada's first woman senator, Wilson was appointed in 1930. In 1949 she was Canada's first woman delegate to the UN.

Wilson, Harold. Labour MP and later prime minister of the United Kingdom.

Woodsworth, J.S. (1874-1942) Methodist minister, politician. Member of Parliament from 1921 until his death in 1942, Woodsworth is best known for being chosen the first leader of the CCF at the Regina convention in 1933.

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